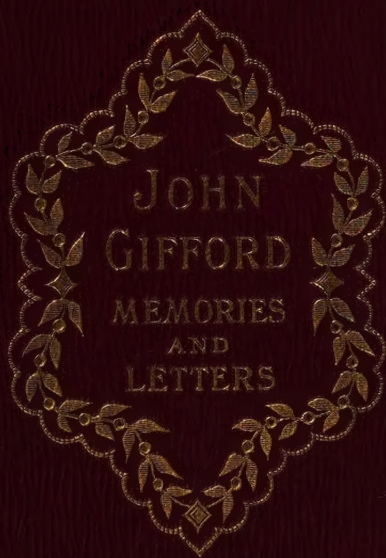
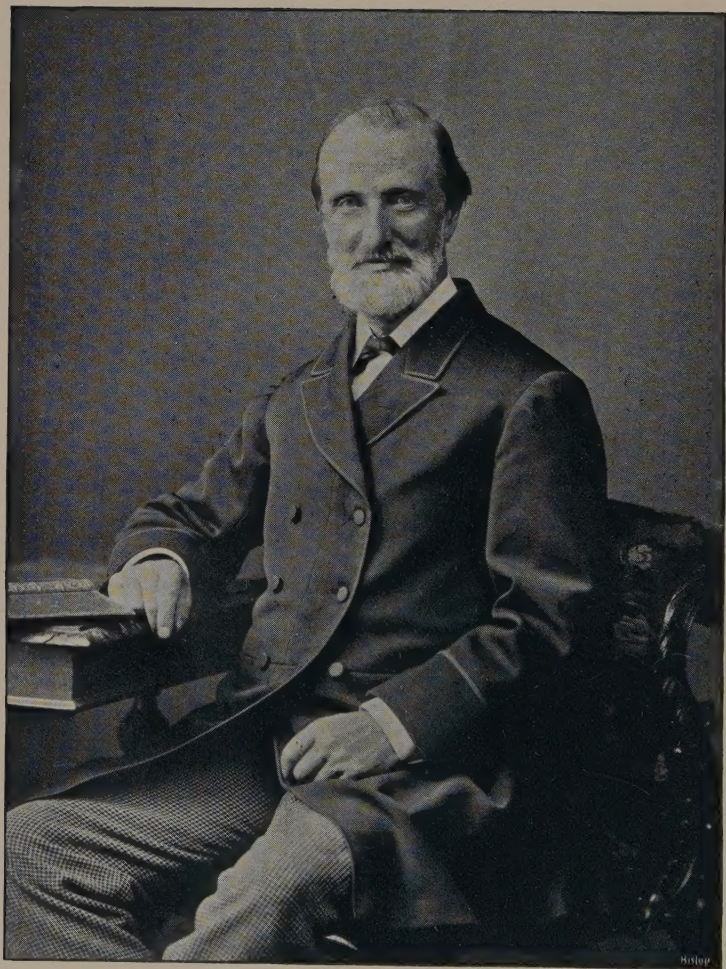


School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1426652





Zus von
John C. Brown

225
5
23

Brög

JOHN GIFFORD

MEMORIES AND LETTERS

EDITED BY HIS SISTER

MARY RALEIGH

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

OLIPHANT, ANDERSON & FERRIER

1896

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

"I have enough."

*From care I am set free,
I vex my heart no more ;
God is my all, His arms encompass me,
My pain and grief are o'er.
He giveth all—I end the strife,
I care no more about my life—
"I have enough."*

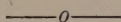
"I have enough."

*I seek His kingdom first,
And all the rest He gives ;
The peace that satisfies all mortal thirst,
In that fair kingdom lives.
I do but ask Him to fulfil
In my poor heart His blessed will.
"I have enough."*

ANON.

Translated from the German.

PREFATORY NOTE

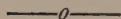


IT is only at the earnest request of friends that these memories of John Gifford have been gathered into a volume. To his quiet and consecrated life it almost seemed that silence might be the fitting sequel. But those who knew him will perhaps like to know him a little better by means of the book.

The broken ranks of the army of God must be filled, and it may inspire and encourage some who are held in the bonds of business as he was, to see what may be done through divine help, by a resolute fervent spirit.

M. R.

CONTENTS



	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
EARLY DAYS	9
CHAPTER II	
THE LIFE CHOICE	25
CHAPTER III	
CHRISTIAN WORK	37
CHAPTER IV	
CHRISTIAN WORK— <i>continued</i>	60
CHAPTER V	
BUSINESS LIFE	85
CHAPTER VI	
MARRIAGE AND HOME	97
CHAPTER VII	
THE END OF THE JOURNEY	118

JOHN GIFFORD

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

“Golden days, where are they?
Ask of childhood’s years,
Still untouched by sorrow,
Still undimmed by tears.”

JOHN GIFFORD was born in Park Street, Edinburgh, on May 5th, 1821. His father, James Gifford, and his grandfather, Adam Gifford, were both natives of Edinburgh. Their business as leather manufacturers was carried on in partnership till, by the death of Adam Gifford, it was left in the hands of his son James.

James Gifford was a man of sterling Christian principles, of great energy, and of sound, far-seeing judgment. His habit of mind led him to put aside accepted theories and popular opinions, and to press

into the secret roots of things. In his thoughts he was often in advance of his time, and his children have lived to see some of his opinions—once considered utopian—accepted and turned to practical use. It is an instance of this that he was among the first, if not the very first, to initiate the new regime which has changed the aspect of almost all the “hospitals” of Edinburgh.

When the North British Railway Company was empowered to buy Trinity College Hospital, which stood in the valley beneath the North Bridge, James Gifford startled his friends by saying that all his influence would be used to prevent its ever being re-built. His long experience of such institutions had taught him that it was very undesirable to place under one roof old people who had little or no occupation, and whose long-acquired tastes and habits unfitted them to live together in peace.

The change he desired was made in the case of Trinity Hospital. Gillespie's Hospital followed suit after a time. His desire about the hospitals for boys and girls has also been realised, for he never approved of them as resident institutions, believing that family life was essential to the right development of children.

One strong opinion like his in the early stage of a movement has impulse in it, and bears fruit.

James Gifford was an advocate all his life for the separation of Church and State. He left the Established Church of Scotland at the Disruption, and it is remembered that when he put down his name for a first subscription to the sustentation fund, he wrote after it, "*A thank-offering for the Church's deliverance.*"

It is not surprising that, thinking for himself as he did, he was sometimes at variance with the leaders of thought and action of his day in Edinburgh. His clear mental vision and a certain tinge of—shall we call it?—Scotch obstinacy to boot, made him a formidable opponent in matters which he really cared about. On the occasion of some such discussion one present said—"Mr Gifford says he is open to conviction." "Yes," replied one of the opposing party. "Yes, but show me the man that will convince him."

With all this, his opinions had in them a touch of poetry and idealism, and no man had a more tender heart, or was more loyal to his friends. His children and some of his older grandchildren know how warm his affection for them was, amounting in the case of

the second generation to a beautiful and joyful devotion. In the farther-off circles, among nephews and nieces, "Uncle Gifford" was a household word, and his opinion on matters of business was final.

His wife was Katherine Ann West, the only child of John and Mary West. Of her John Gifford writes :—*

"How shall I describe dear mother? Vigorous in body and mind, she was a most independent thinker—her thoughts ever more numerous than her words. She was not much taken up with the externals of life, but deeply impressed with its spiritual realities. This made her friends say 'she was easy-going,' and her economies in household management and decisions in practical life were carried out regardless of criticism.

"Like her husband, she loved the Lord, and earnestly and constantly served Him."

The family at Park Street consisted of John and one brother, Adam (afterwards Lord Gifford). Adam was the elder,—born in 1820, being Leap-year, and on the 29th of February, Leap-day,—thus having a birthday only once in four years. John had a serious illness when about two and a-half years old. He

* In "Recollections of a Brother," written for private circulation.

was very weak, and his little mind wandered. His frequent cry "I want home" was pathetic in his mother's ears, who thought he was really going to the home in heaven.

In most families childish stories or sayings are retained, and handed down, of little interest, perhaps, to any but the very nearest of the home circle. Still, two of these may be worth repeating. When John was about three years old, his nurse, carrying him through a dark room, was foolish enough to say, "Oh, John, are you no *feared*, it's so dark?" The baby's answer came quickly. "Iza! God's in the dark as well as in the light." May we not say that this—God in all—in rooms light or dark in the house of his life, and in the last dark room of all—was the religion of his heart? The seed was early sown by his mother's hand, and it rooted soon and deep.

One day, when a little older, in the new garden at Arniston Place, John was digging with his little spade, when suddenly he said to his father, "God is everywhere; when I dig do I hurt God?"

The only other serious illness he ever had till his last, was when he was about nineteen years of age; then he had internal inflammation and was in great danger.

He was bled in the arm, according to the custom of the time, and lost a cupful of blood. He fainted, to the great alarm of his father and mother. The wonder was that he survived the treatment.

In the beginning of 1825 Mr and Mrs James Gifford moved to No. 11 Arniston Place, Newington, and there a little daughter was born. The house is now the office of a branch of the Union Bank of Scotland, and is called 25 Newington Road.

Of it John writes :—

“It is the first house of which my memory bears any record. I remember the ‘flitting’ from Park Street, and the wonder and curiosity which the new house excited. It had a plot of grass in front, and behind a strip of garden ground. Father purchased this house, and found great delight in it and in the garden. He put up a summer-house, and a dove-cot, and, with hammer and nails, did many a little piece of work in and outside the house. The walls of the garden were clothed with fruit trees and currant bushes, and on them some cherries, pears, and ribston pippins ripened.”

There, under their mother’s tuition, the education of the boys began. In order to secure a time free from interruption, lessons began at seven A.M., and before the boys went to school to learn Latin and

Greek, they had mastered the first elements of an English education, in which their mother was well qualified to be their teacher.

Life was simple in that Arniston Place household. Our father went to business at about nine A.M. and returned home to dinner at four, the usual hour for business men in those days. When necessary, he went back to town for a short time in the evening. But there was not the high pressure then that there has come to be since. Competition was less keen. There were no railways and no telegraph; there was not so much desire or "haste to be rich" as there is now, probably because riches were not then so attainable. As an instance of the leisurely manner in which things went on, it was not uncommon in these early twenties of the century to see on the door of an office in Edinburgh, on a fine afternoon, "Gone to golf, will be back at four," or "five," as the case might be.

There was leisure at home too. In the home we are speaking of, our mother was never in a hurry, and parents and children saw much of one another. The children were ruled with a gentle, yet a firm and reasonable hand, a restraint so wise that it was

hardly felt. And the fear of God was the ruling principle of the house—to obey and serve Him was the steady aim of both father and mother, and almost unconsciously the children caught the spirit of the place. John, in after life, often spoke of his recollection of “family worship” morning and evening, and of his father’s prayers, earnest and brief, laying the needs or burdens of the time on the Divine care, and claiming the Divine promise. Four verses of a psalm were generally given out, our father leading the tune, and, it must be owned, doing most of the singing—none of us inherited his gift of music.

John has often spoken of his father and mother’s prayers as a precious heritage laid up for children, and for children’s children, sure to be answered when God’s time should come.

Mr James Gifford taught a Sunday school, begun by himself and his brother, Mr Alex. Gifford, and carried on for many years. But this work did not prevent his careful teaching of his own children. On returning from afternoon church (there was no evening service then), the boys repeated to him the Shorter Catechism, taking the questions and

answers in turn, and as far as might be, the meaning was explained to them. They went, I think, through the half of the catechism every Sabbath, asking and answering the questions from memory. Hymns were learned and repeated—not as a task, it was a pleasure, and gave to us the first experience of delight in poetry, which has been a solace all through life. One hymn stands out in memory, a favourite of John's, and repeated by him with great feeling :—

“Dark river of death that art flowing
Between the bright City and me,
Thou boundest the path I am going,
Oh ! how shall I pass over thee ?”

I think as children we thought a good deal about that “River” with a deep and breathless interest. Perhaps it was because the type of religion in Scotland inclined then, and perhaps does still, to the more solemn and awful aspect of revealed truth.

Less, certainly, was done for children then than is done now. Self-help was taught early, and the little group at No. 11 were left pretty much to find their

own natural and innocent amusements. At all events no great effort was made to provide pleasures for them. Consequently, what pleasures did come were enjoyed with a fresh and untired zest. Very little things, which the children of to-day might despise, were welcomed and enjoyed.

Mrs Gifford's step-sister, Jean, had married Mr James M'Laren, tea merchant, Edinburgh, and their large family of children, living near Arniston Place, were close and dear companions of the smaller group. The stir of a large household was exhilarating, and the joy of being free of the busy house in Minto Street, and the young cousins equally so of 11 Arniston Place, never palled. The comings and goings, the joys and sorrows of both families filled a large space in the lives of all. The affection of long ago has lasted through all the changing years, and if the circle is narrowing fast, it will, we believe, be re-formed in the better country.

Two other cousins, Adam and Catherine, children of Mr Alexander Gifford, were also dear companions of that time. They both died young, of consumption, Catherine in 1852 and Adam in 1854.

Adam and John Gifford went, at seven and eight

years of age, to a private school for Latin and Greek, taught by Mr John Laurie, West Nicolson Street, who in his day brought forward several scholars who afterwards distinguished themselves at the University. Mr Laurie was an excellent man. Years afterwards, speaking of those two little scholars, he said to a friend, "I follow their career with interest, and *I pray for them.*"

In 1832 they became pupils at the Edinburgh Institution, then opened in Hill Street by the Rev. Robert Cuningham. The school was a new departure; not Latin and Greek only, but French, German, Mathematics, and English Literature were included in the course. There, practically, John's education was received. He always acknowledged that he owed much to Mr Cuningham, especially to his Saturday Bible Class, and still more to the high and pure influence of his character. John was not so studious as his brother; it was only after he left school that he set himself to read in earnest and to store up information. In school days he was too playful and fond of fun to study hard.

The "recollections" well describe the kind of life of that time, and the simple pleasures it brought. As

yet, cricket and football were not, and golf was not always attainable.

John writes :—

“Saturday walks were a most important element in our lives. Arthur Seat, Blackford Burn, and subsequently Portobello, were often visited. We made boats with our penknives, and to launch them, full-rigged, on Blackford Burn was an event of great interest. I remember a nice boat of Adam’s, with a lugger sail, ‘The Earl Grey,’ suffering under the stones thrown at it by some carter boys. Moredun Mill, two miles out of Edinburgh, on the Gilmerton Road, was a paradise for us. Mr Salmond, the miller, invited us on a Saturday, now and then, and we enjoyed it much; for there was the mill and the pond, a wood and a burn, besides a pony and a garden with gooseberries and currants, a world of delights to town boys as we were.

“Once a year father and some friends got up a pic-nic to Habbie’s Howe in the Pentland Hills. We had only carts with clean straw to carry us the ten miles, but it was glorious in prospect and in execution. The mates we were oftenest with were James and Hugh Pillans, and the two Fergusons, Archie and Robert. On Saturdays, many a mile we walked with them. Of these four, Robert has long been dead; the other three still survive, with the honour and esteem of their early playfellows, and of all who know them. . . .”

"We had a society for asking and answering questions (these were printed in the form of a little catechism), and a picture exhibition. Adam and I played chess a good deal when we were ten or twelve years old; we made with our penknives more than one set of chess men, but when lessons became harder and life busier, chess, as it took too much time, was given up."

Yes, some things had to be "given up" as life became more busy for both, but through its most crowded years, and onward till the elder brother entered into rest, there was no diminution of the joy which they found in each other's fellowship. Never were brothers more closely united in affection, and the difference of their mental character only seemed to draw them closer to each other. They were counterparts, not repetitions; unlike in many things, but in the deepest things of faith, and in the glow of holy aspiration, they were one.

Some other memories of that time he records:—

"I remember Miss Ann Trail staying with us and painting a portrait of the Rev. Dr Gordon. The doctor was throned in an arm chair in the dining-room, with a bright red shawl of mother's thrown round him. Miss Trail afterwards joined the Church of Rome, and became one of the sisters of charity when they were established at

Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh, under the title of St Margaret's Convent.

"Two scenes of our amusements may be sketched. At the top of our back garden, on the other side of the wall, was a piece of unoccupied ground. This was our frequent resort, and on the King's birthday, our Saturday's half-pennies having been accumulated for weeks before, we had a small supply of gunpowder, and some pieces of small artillery. We gathered sticks and made a bonfire, roasted potatoes in the ashes, and were very jolly.

"Once I was sent over the wall to 'borrow' a lump of coal from mother's cellar. When I got to the top of the garden, before throwing the coal over the wall, I called out to give warning. One of the Fergusons misunderstood the call, and ran to the spot, only to receive on his head the full force of the large piece of coal. It knocked him down, and we all—I especially—got a fright. This, fortunately, was the only result.

"The network of walls that enclosed the gardens of the neighbourhood was another field of constant entertainment. We made, like cats, a regular walk round all the walls; they had a level copestone, and on it we enjoyed our freedom. Unfortunately, the proprietors objected to our presence, and sent the police after us. This added zest to the enterprise, and we got barrel staves, with a string attached to one end, which served as scaling ladders to enable us to reach the top of the wall easily, and escape the officers.

“One of the neighbouring houses was occupied by Dr Knox, who was suspected, rightly or wrongly, of being associated with the notorious murderers, Burke and Hare. I remember well the evening when the mob assaulted his house, and smashed every pane of glass in his and the adjoining houses. Dr Knox himself made his escape by these back-garden walls.”

Excursions by the then new railway, called the “Innocent Railway” (a name given to it by “Chambers’s Journal”), was a pleasant feature of these days. Our father, Mr James Gifford, cheerful and fond of the country, and happy in the society of his children and their friends, often arranged a trip on Saturday afternoons, and always on the Queen’s birthday, which falls in the month of May.

The terminus of the railway was at St Leonard’s. It was said that no one was ever too late for that railway—the train always waited while any approaching passenger was in sight. It was guiltless of a snorting steam engine. Rails were laid, and after passing through a short inclined tunnel with the safe-guard of a rope, the small train emerged just below “Samson’s Ribs,” a basaltic cliff well known to all Edinburgh people. There a horse was fastened to each couple

of carriages, and they ran smoothly enough to Dalkeith, Portobello, and various places a few miles out of Edinburgh. To encourage the undertaking the Earl of Dalhousie opened his beautiful park and woods to visitors, and this for us was always the goal of these expeditions. A clear burn ran through the grounds ; there were woods starry with primroses, and there the boys and girls, after the luncheon baskets had been emptied, were free to wander as they chose. These were happy times, and none who shared their careless sweetness will ever forget Dalhousie Park.

In the winter, skating was the best amusement for the boys when it could be had. John and Adam used to be on the ice soon after six in the morning, walking to Duddingston Loch, a mile or more from Arniston Place, and skating by moonlight till eight o'clock. Both were busy then, and had no other time.

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE CHOICE

“’Tis an assured good to choose the noblest. ’Tis your only good, now you have seen it ; for that higher vision poisons all meaner choice for evermore.”—*George Eliot*.

AT fifteen years of age John Gifford was entered as an apprentice in the National Bank of Scotland, in St Andrew Square, and the line of his life was chosen. Too early, we should say now; and looking back, he sometimes expressed a wish that a year or two longer of education had been allowed him. Yet, there is something to be said for an early beginning of business life, especially in the case of boys not much given to study. It saves them from the risk of loitering, and gives the great safeguard of full occupation. Many a youth sent to College and demoralised by years of slack study and active idleness would have been saved had he entered earlier on the business of life.

There is not much to tell of these years. Like the life of a nation, most prosperous when it has no history, they flowed on in a steady uneventful course, but in them, not the less, character was being developed, and the choice made which was to be followed to the end. There is no record in his diary of that great change which comes consciously to most Christian people and turns them from darkness to light. Probably in John Gifford it was a gradual process, growing in him from infancy—the fruit of Christian influence at home, and of Gospel teaching in the church. But it asserted itself in power, and became manifest outwardly when he was sixteen or seventeen years of age—in 1837-38.

Although the little sister was welcomed, and no doubt contributed something to the happiness of her brothers, yet her loneliness at home, being the only daughter, and her energetic efforts to do whatever “the boys” did, made her not seldom a hindrance and a cross, especially to John. Adam’s temperament was too philosophic from the first to be moved by trifles. I remember that John and I quarrelled a good deal when I was nearly entering my teens; this, every one knows, is quite compatible with a real

affection in children, and in older people too. I remember, for it struck my childish mind as very strange at the time, that quite suddenly we quarrelled no more. It was not that there was any change in me, for I was impetuous as ever, and had little self-control; but something there was which entirely softened and sweetened our relationship, and left me, to my surprise, without my antagonist. I knew later the cause of the change—my dear brother had passed, by God's grace, under the softening power of that Spirit whose early fruit is "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness." From that time, all through life, the dear bonds of affection which held us together never were broken by a word or tone.

About this time, passing his room in the early morning, I have often been arrested by his voice in earnest prayer. The words were undistinguishable, but the solemn pleading tones, spoken as to One who was very near, used to fill me with awe as I stole away. Our mother, too, heard that voice of prayer at this time, and many long years afterwards told my brother himself how great her joy was, adding, "I never had any fear for you after that."

The New North Church, then under the charge of

the Rev. John Bruce, was the church where James Gifford and his family worshipped at this time. His keen, thoughtful sermons—touched, like a flashing sword-blade, with genius and spiritual light—gave much enjoyment to our mother and to Adam. They were rather beyond the scope of John and myself. After Mr Bruce was removed to St Andrew's Church, George Street, the family remained under the fervent ministry of the Rev. Charles J. Brown, and it was then that both brothers became members of the church, and for both life began to assume a more serious aspect.

1840.—John was now a diligent student, and hardly a day passed that he did not find time for reading some work of permanent value. He became a member of the Diagnostic Debating Society, in connection with which books had to be read and papers written. Adam was now engaged for long hours daily in the business of a lawyer's office—that of his uncle Mr Alex. Gifford, S.S.C.—and the only time when the brothers and myself met in quietness was after supper, somewhat late in the evening. Then, round the dining-room fire in Arniston Place, we three held long and often late conversations. In fact, it was a

sort of family debating society. What was it that was not discussed and commented on there? Books—old and new, poetry, questions of the day, characters in history and literature, and sometimes questions in theology. These seemed to touch everything, and a stillness would fall, and seriousness quell the wild spirits of the group, as regions of thought were entered where mystery and silence barred the way. In these discussions John always leaned to the practical side; Adam to the theoretic and philosophical—and the decisions of the future Judge were often vehemently opposed and irreverently set aside.

It was an education for all three. If our talk was unduly prolonged, I see now, as in a mist of memory, our mother's head in *bonnet de nuit* put in at the door, with the remonstrance, "Children, do you know how late it is?"

Among John Gifford's papers, dated from 1841 and onwards, there is one, very yellow with age, and its writing dim and pale. On its blank page is written "Private covenant with my God and Saviour."

It must still be private, but one closing sentence may be given—

"His will shall be the guide of my way, His people my fellow-pilgrims ; faith in Jesus Christ, love to God with all my heart, and love to my fellow-men as to myself, my only rule of life."

It is signed "on Sabbath, fifth day of September 1841, at Edinburgh."

JOHN GIFFORD.

He was twenty years of age when this deed of consecration was written.

On the page opposite the signature there are written several subsequent dates, with initials, each date preceded by one or two words apparently renewals of the first vow. They are added here—

"Thine, O Lord,"	.	.	24th April 1842.	.	J. G.
"Rejoice with trembling,"	.	.	30th Oct. 1842.	.	J. G.
"Alas, that which I would, I					
do not,"	.	.	31st Oct. 1843.	.	J. G.
"Lord, remember me,"	.	.	26th Jan. 1845.	.	J. G.
"Wait on the Lord,"	.	.	27th April 1848.	.	J. G.
"My Lord and my God,"	.	.	29th April 1849.	.	J. G.
"Looking to Jesus,"	.	.	26th Oct. 1851.	.	J. G.

1845.—For some years from 1845 we find jottings

made from time to time in a series of small sheets of paper folded to one size, in the form of little books, and filled with a variety of material—sketches of Bible lessons, given or to be given—criticisms of books read—details of passing incidents—often personal confessions and aspirations. A few of these find a place here.

“*June 18th, 1846.*—Must I begin my record with lost time. Trifled by talking after meals. When I do talk I ought to exert myself to try to do it well, not lazily to kill time. . . .”

“*19th, Friday.*—Studying ‘Edwards on the Will,’ and ‘Life of Fichte,’ five hours.

“Mind filled with imaginations worse than useless. ‘Think on these things.’ I must try to fill my mind with some subject worth thinking about.”

“*20th.*—Rose at six. I lose time in the morning by my mind being dull and sleepy, even when I have been up some time. . . . Motive is what I want. Do Thou quicken me, enlarge my heart! . . .

“Felt pride and self-sufficiency; remarkable that pride usually rests on what we have the least of. Got little good from Scripture to-day. Why?”

"22nd.—At Granton, to bathe.

"Friends here in the evening. I very talkative and gay.

"Reading 'Mammon.'"

"23rd.—Lost two hours before breakfast.

"Read and studied only three hours."

"27th.—Granton in early morning. How little good, if any, have I done to those with whom I continually have intercourse in business. How false the zeal that does not use the *readiest* opportunity! Must try to gain more influence, to pray more earnestly. . . ."

"28th, *Sabbath*.—Must shake of drowsiness in Church. I never almost feel sleepy but there. What a shame!"

"*July 1st*, 1846.—Fellowship meeting at 105 South Bridge. All there. Josiah Livingston after a long absence.

"Received from their hands, they were pleased to say, 'as a token of gratitude for my services about the meeting,' a splendid copy of Edwards' works, in two large volumes, and a copy of Foster's Lectures. It was most unexpected, and really undeserved. Yet I am grateful to God for their love and kindness; it is a high joy to be so loved."

"*July 6th*.—Contrived to miss, nearly altogether, my hour for private devotion. Lounged away an hour and a-half in the evening. Friends at tea—talked and laughed, but forgot to do good as I had opportunity."

We are poor judges of our own doings. Probably

his bright talk and merry laughter were the very best "good" for the time. The sunshine of his cheerfulness was like a benediction.

"26th, Wednesday.—Rose at 6.30. Foster's Lectures—prepared students' address."

"August 27th.—Spent the evening with the Fergusons. Robert goes to Egypt on Saturday. Reviewed our childish and boyish exploits; enjoyed the time exceedingly. Want of seriousness, however, considering the circumstances in which we met."*

"September 2nd, Wednesday.—Have something to do, and it will be more easy to get out of bed. Seven hours is too long to sleep—must be curtailed. A course of study must be arranged. French—Latin—Greek revised."

"6th, Sabbath morning. — Quarterly prayer meeting. Joined in prayer with sixty or eighty young men at 7.30 A.M. Mind inactive and sleepy in afternoon.† Eternal things ought to keep me awake one day in seven."

"16th.—Mr Dickson died suddenly to-day at 4.30. I

* Robert Ferguson was sent to Egypt to check threatened consumption. He never recovered.

† Surely not surprising. His weariness on Sabbath evenings, often in these early journals regretfully noticed, was due no doubt to overstrained powers. It might perhaps also result from the Scotch custom, then common, of no dinner on the Sabbath day!

had to go over to South St Andrew Street to tell David Dickson. A heavy task. He would not believe me. 'Have you a letter? Is there no mistake?' And then he was quite overcome—he could not realise it. Death gives no previous lessons, either in our own case or that of dear friends. Death breaks up many purposes. We must see to it that it breaks not up our *life-purpose*—to serve God.

"I have now seen many friends pass away—many of my Father's friends. The circle is gradually lessening like the huntsman's ring. He will come at last."

A fortnight's holiday was spent from September 22nd with some friends at Brig o' Turk.

"*Tuesday, September 22nd.*—Going to Stirling in the steamboat, I saw Dr Duncan,* with his wife and family on board. After passing Alloa I noticed him pacing the deck alone. I went up to him, and naming him, said I had no introduction except that I had heard him preach in the New North Church. He immediately took my arm, and walked with me. Almost the first word he said was, 'Well, my friend, do you know the Lord Jesus?' Our talk was soon interrupted, as Mrs Duncan sent for him, and he left me. When disembarking at Stirling he sought me out among the crowd, and, touching my shoulder, said, 'My friend, never let a day pass without spending some time in seeking to get nearer to Christ.'

* Professor of Hebrew in Free Church College, Edinburgh.

"On Friday the 25th we slept at Brig o' Turk. The party consisted of myself, Mr Murray, his brother and cousin, and some other friends. Next morning I proposed a swim in the Teith. Mr Murray said he would come with me. Two others of our party walked with us along the Teith, which was swollen by rain.

"At a wide pool we proposed to bathe, first, however, asking a man, whom we saw at work in a field, if it was usual to bathe there. 'Oh, yes,' he said, 'quite common.' Mr Murray and I both undressed, he saying that 'he could swim a little, but had never been out of his depth,' adding, 'I would not like to try that here.'

"I had swum across the pool, when, looking round, I saw him slipping under water and struggling; I called to him, and he gave me an intensely appealing look. Was it possible he was drowning? I swam up to him, saying, 'Keep down your hands,' but as soon as I was near him, he seized me round the waist, and we sank together to the bottom of the pool. I never lost consciousness; I felt the water entering my mouth and nostrils, and I could use neither hands nor feet—how long this continued I know not. Suddenly he let go his grasp; he told me afterwards that he let me go when he 'found I could not help him.' I rose to the surface, and made feebly for the shore, crying 'Help! help!' When I reached standing ground, I looked round, and saw that the current had swept him shorewards, and that his head was above water, as he stood at the lower end of the pool.

"I called to him to stand still, and wading out to him, we got safely to the bank.

"We stood looking at one another—had he kept his grasp we must both have been drowned. My first thought was, 'Some one has been praying for us this morning—was it my mother?'

"The practical lesson is evident, should I ever be in like circumstances. 'Avoid the grasp. Collect your mind and use it.' I did not do this."

CHAPTER III

CHRISTIAN WORK

“Oh ! it is great ; there is no other greatness—to make some nook of God’s creation a little fruitfuller, better, more worthy of God.”—*Carlyle*.

JOHN GIFFORD’S Christian work began in early youth and was carried on without pause till the close of his life. Its course ran parallel with his secular work (if we can call any work of his secular), and it pervaded all his activities and all his thoughts. For the sake of clearness it must be given here in a separated form.

1838.—Two friends holding office in the National Bank of Scotland were interested in the young apprentice, Mr Adam White and Mr Gilmore, and the latter persuaded him to attempt to teach a Sunday class in a mission school connected with the New North Church. He was then under eighteen years of age. We quote his own words :—

“I went, and had a class given me of three or four little boys. Diligently and fluently I spoke to them about the question in the Shorter Catechism which was given out for the day. After six or eight weeks of such talk I began to think it might be well to find out what they had understood and remembered of the lessons. The result of an examination was that they neither understood nor remembered *the least part* of all I had tried to teach them ! It was a humiliating but very beneficial experience. I never forgot again what ought to be the essential aim of Sabbath School teaching.”

He might have said of any teaching.

After some further experience in Sabbath School work he formed a class in Old Assembly Close, for apprentice lads who were beyond the usual age for attendance at an ordinary Sabbath School. Some good work was done, and the members of that class in 1848 formed themselves into a society for mutual improvement. True to their chief, they called themselves “The Gifford Young Men’s Mutual Improvement Society.” Some details of this society will be given in due course.

In 1853 John Gifford undertook to assist his uncle Mr Alexander Gifford in his own school in Quarry Close. This school was founded by the brothers

James and Alexander Gifford, about the year 1820, at a time when Sunday Schools were not very common. Mr James Gifford had retired from it for some years, and Adam Gifford, our cousin, had been an able assistant to his father in the work. At his death the school was left in Mr Alexander Gifford's hands. He requested John to come and give his help where it was so much needed. This he agreed to do. In 1868 Mr Gifford felt his strength unequal to the task, and from that time John took entire charge of the school till 1880, when he was called to other work.

The fruit of these years of careful work has been seen in the lives of many of the scholars. Letters have been found full of gratitude for teaching and influence of long ago. Some of them tell of efforts made by the writers in their turn to persuade friends and fellow-workmen to enter on the Christian life. John Gifford himself writes :—

“In the work of the Sabbath School I found a great reward. It exercised body, mind, and soul. It taught me to know my Bible, to think of and to feel for my fellow-creatures, and humbly to serve the Lord, with his true disciples, in doing good.

Laus Deo !”

His mind never rested in routine, nor was he ever content to go on, year by year, in one groove. United action was needed in the work of Sabbath Schools, and John Gifford joined with some friends as early as 1842 in forming the Edinburgh Sabbath School Union.

Its objects were to stimulate and improve teachers, to gather statistics with a view to supply deficiencies, and so to divide the country that competition or overlapping should be avoided, and in other ways to help on the cause.

An agent was appointed to travel in Scotland to gather information from teachers and ministers, suggest reforms, give model lessons, exhibit plans for Sabbath School buildings, and in all ways to give help and stimulus to the movement. Mr Charles Inglis was the man appointed, and one who knew him and his work well—the Rev. Robt. B. Blyth—writes of “his laborious and blessedly fruitful career.”

In the year 1868 Annual Sabbath School Conventions were first instituted in Scotland, and to these John Gifford, when he could, gave his presence and his influence. In September 1870, in the convention which met at Dumfries, he read a paper on

“How to give the Sabbath School a better status and influence in the community.”

In connection with the Union a teachers' magazine was started, and it contained notes on Bible lessons. These, for five or six years, were mostly written by himself. These notes came out in quarterly numbers, and we find in the magazine a record of their sale. Up to June 1859 it amounted to 34,000 quarterly parts.

These aids to Sabbath School teachers are common now over all the world, but it is believed that those we refer to are the first. He himself writes—“They were the first, so far as I know.”

Two specimens only can be given here of these Scripture notes. Most of them are remarkable for freshness, directness, and a kind of subtle grace difficult to describe.

LESSON. FIFTH SERIES.

Gideon's Victory. (Judges vii. 1-23.)

Connection.—The valley of Jezreel, where Midian was encamped, was a vast plain stretching to the north-west of Mount Gilboa. Gideon's army was drawn from Manasseh and the northern tribes of Israel.

I.—*The Three Hundred.* (Ver. 1-8.)

Israel's army seems to have got to the south side of Midian's camp (ver. 1).

The proclamation to the faint-hearted was usual (Deut. xx. 8).

The march in so warm a climate fatigued the men, and all, except three hundred, yielded to their thirst, and drank deeply—the others in moderation. It was really a test of self-control and endurance.

II.—*The Dream.* (Ver. 9-15.)

That night no rest for these three hundred. "*If thou fear*"—how kindly God deals with Gideon! His fear must be expelled. He and his servant crept past the watch-fires, they heard the dream told in a tent. It was indeed singular, and its interpretation powerfully affected Israel's general. *He worshipped* on the turf where he lay.

III.—*Its Fulfilment.* (Ver. 16-25.)

With new energy Gideon completes the arrangements for an immediate attack.

Empty pitchers hiding the lamps till the signal was given—the sudden crash and glare—the sound of three hundred trumpets around the dark camp of Midian—God sent among them the spirit of fear (ver. 22).

The attack was made at the change of the middle watch, or ten o'clock. The Hebrews had three watches of four hours each. The Romans four, of three hours each. The enemy fled toward Jordan, Israel pursuing. The victory was so complete that Midian is never again mentioned in the sacred story.

Application.

1. *None shall say, "Mine own hand hath saved me."* All the saved on earth are humble. "Not unto us." All the saved in heaven cast their crowns at the feet of Christ.

2. *Soldiers of Christ must be without fear.* The faint-hearted were sent home; even Gideon must give up fear. It needs a bold heart to do right and fear nothing but sin. Joseph—Daniel. Fear makes us sin. Peter.

3. *Soldiers of Christ must deny themselves—"endure hardness."* The thousands who were too eager to quench their thirst were rejected. None can serve Christ and indulge themselves. Are you self-indulgent?

4. God gives the victory to the weak. Goliath falls before David. Empires fall. Christ's Church stands. The Pharisee perishes—the Publican is saved. Christ's Gospel seemed weak. It must prevail.

5. How different are God's ways from ours! Be willing to take *His* way. Gideon was strangely led. Abraham, Joseph, David, Paul reach heaven, but not in the way they would choose.

*How to be Great. (Luke xxii. 24-38.)**I.—The Strife of the Disciples.*

1. *It was an old quarrel.*
2. It was a quarrel arising from ambition.
3. Our Lord's rebuke. They were acting like heathens (ver. 25).

They were taking the wrong way to greatness (ver. 26).

They were forgetting their Master's example (ver. 27).

He served.

They were forgetting their own past fidelity to Him.

II.—The Warning to Peter.

His danger—from Satan—from self-confidence. His safety. Christ's prayer for him.

Application.

1. How gently Christ reproves! So Simon—and Judas.
2. The way to greatness open to all. Only a few can be gifted or titled, or rich or famous. All may be good, and the good are the great.
3. How great the reward! A kingdom—a crown. Then let us not "be weary in well-doing!"
4. How blessed to know Christ prays for His people!

From notes of another sort of lessons with which he was very successful I give one or two specimens.

LESSON.

Telling Fortunes.

Describe a gipsy.

People like to know what will happen to them ; would like to lift the curtain of the future.

One only knows our future—God.

One Book will tell it—the Bible.

On two parts of us is our history written.

I. *On the hand.* Not the lines on the hand, but the doings of the hand, will tell it. If I want to know what will happen to you, I will watch your hand—*what you do*. It does not lie so often as the tongue.

Is it idle ?

Does it strike or steal ?

Does it do good ?

Does it do evil ?

Does it give ?

In either case, the Bible tells you your fate.

II. *On the heart.* Like the spring of a watch, the heart moves the hands.

God reads the heart, but you can know something of it.

What does it think about *sin* ?

Does it feel humble or proud ?

Does it love or hate ?

What does it wish for most ? to be good or great.

According to these things your future will be.

Manuscript books, in many volumes, are full of sketches more or less full on such subjects. They tell us how constantly his mind was at work, and how carefully he thought out what he gave to others.

The names in the index are suggestive.

"I ought."

"I don't like."

"Weeds."

"Go home to thy friends."

"Two homes."

"My place."

It may be of interest to add one or two more of these notes.

LESSON.

"Counteth the Cost." (Luke iv. 28.)

Arithmetic is the science of profit and loss. The devil hates counting. Bankrupts are afraid of looking at their books. One who is careless about paying does not ask the price.

Everything has its price. You must pay.

There is a blood-written bargain with Satan if you accept his gifts. Now—or afterwards.

Bills are often drawn at a distant date.

Devil appears to give for nothing *now*!

What a price at last!

Esau sold his birthright, did not pay for many a year.

Christ desires all to "count the cost." He knows His offer is good and sound.

I.—Count the Cost of Pleasure.

It is God's good gift, but you may pay too dear for it. Africans pay dear for paltry beads. They pay precious furs and gold and ivory.

The devil baits his hook with pleasure. Oh! *that hook!* deep-hidden and sharp! Payment falls 10, 20, 30 years after—perhaps not till you are dead. His payment is too heavy.

Eat the seed-corn—famine is the payment! Get the water of Bethlehem—human life is the price. Flower on precipice—paid with the death-fall.

Pride costs too much.

Passion costs too much.

II.—Count what it will Cost to be a Christian.

Christ asks us to "count" this—to think it out—no haste—"sitteth down first." Come to a reasonable decision.

It will give you a cross to carry, understand this.

Self must be denied. You must say "no" to yourself every day.

It will cost you your sins.

Sin is your soul's disease, give it up.

Surely no loss to give up a disease.

It will cost you the love of the world. Empty in heart and hand you must be to receive Him.

III.—*What will it Cost to reject Christ?*

You will get only the husks of the world—only the *outside* of its best things, nothing more.

It will cost you a guilty conscience.

This is the worm that never dies, this is the fire that is never quenched.

It will cost you God's anger.

“The wrath of the Lamb.”

“Depart, ye cursed.”

It will cost you your soul.

“What shall it profit,” &c.

Count! Take time; take thought; put it on paper. If you count honestly, *the sum will come right*.

Moses “counted” the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

Paul “counted” all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. “I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.”

Everything good and precious is on this side of the reckoning,

“He will give grace and glory. No good thing will He withhold.”

Heaven—the beautiful home—is on this side. “*Count*” and Come!

The following are notes of an address to John Gifford’s class of young women in Carrubber’s Close.

LESSON.

A terrible thing happened to the best girl in my class! She was married! Alas, to a drunkard and a vagabond.

Picture the wedding, bright and gay.

The home, after six months—wretched, dirty, continual quarrels.

She was *determined* to be married.

Afraid to be an old maid! such a mistake.

Who *ought* to be old maids? The vain, the foolish, the useless, those who love no one but themselves; unfortunately, such persons are most sure to marry.

There are old maids—I know them!—who are old maids because they are too good. They are *matchless! marrowless!* no mate fit for them! They are sisters of charity, sisters of Christ.

Be a woman; be independent.

In head—in understanding.

Duty—rights of women.

In hand. Wonderful power in it, Mesmeric touch,

In heart. Many have next to none. George IV.—
Napoleon.

Love, and you will be loved.

Principle. The fear of God is the chief thing. Keep on
this main line. Marriage is only a siding. Beware of the
sloping switch, anything that turns you off from the main
line, the true end of life.

By God's help, be a Christian woman.

If offer of marriage comes, well, "Ask your Father in
heaven"—about it.

If you agree, ask Christ to the marriage.

One more only shall be given.

ADDRESS TO MOTHERS.

The Home.

1. You furnish it. Get some nice and useful things—
chest of drawers, table, some pretty things, perhaps,
too.

You put it in order—all neat.

2. By and bye other furniture comes—*the bairns*. A
new sort of "moveables!" They won't stay where they
are put!

Give them a place—

In your heart.

In your thoughts.

In your prayers.

Never think of them as "in the way."

There is "room" for them among the angels.

Teach them gently, firmly, *to obey*.

Not the new fashion, "Parents, obey your children."

3. *The gudeman, i.e., good man.*

Give him his place willingly.

Don't contradict and oppose.

Yield, and *so* conquer.

Old song, "Tak' your auld cloak about ye." The wife—
wise in gentle speech. He *did* take it !

Make the house a home for him.

Make it orderly. It is small, I know ; the more need for
order. In the little cabin of a yacht everything has its
place, fitted into small compass.

No comfort if no order.

Compete with public house—as clean, as bright, as
attractive, with a smile of loving welcome never found
there.

4. *Have Jesus Christ* in your home.

Is there room for Him there ?

There was "no room" in the Inn.

Bible. Family worship. Church.

Him that honoureth Me I will honour.

It could only have been by the most careful use of
time that these lessons, so numerous, could have been

prepared. His duties in the Bank claimed from him most of every week-day, with the exception of Saturday afternoon.

GIFFORD'S YOUNG MEN'S MUTUAL IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY.

This Society was formed on December 2nd, 1848, in No. 3 Hill Square, by the young men attending John Gifford's Bible Class in Old Assembly Close. Its aim was the moral, religious and intellectual improvement of its members. It comprised, in its scheme, essays, debates, reviews; and latterly, readings and recitations.

The meetings were held once a fortnight in the Quarry Close schoolroom. One meeting quarterly was entirely devoted to religious exercises.

A journal was started in 1853, and prospered for a time. The society was never large; it had on its roll twenty-four names only.

In 1855 its name was changed to "The Gifford Literary Society." It had a life of eight years, amid difficulties incidental to a society composed by members most of whom had to work hard for daily bread, and whose spare time was but scanty.

But it aroused an interest on worthy subjects, and gave a good impulse to some young lives. Friendships were formed there which continue to this day.

As the original members left Edinburgh, or were too busy to attend regularly, it was allowed to collapse, but an annual meeting of old members was held to revive old associations and maintain early friendships.

The 46th annual re-union of the society took place on the 15th of October 1894, in Darling's Hotel, Mr Gifford in the chair. A pleasant evening was spent.

Invitations were issued in November for the re-union of 1895, but Mr Gifford's illness began then to assume a serious form, and it was never held.

It is interesting to think of the little band of early members of 1848—young, eager, new to life and its hopes. In 1894 we see some of them again with the changes of forty-six years upon them. They are grey-haired now—almost all of them are grandfathers, and life lies behind them. Yet they acknowledge gladly the influence that came to them long ago from the friendship of their young teacher.

It was characteristic of his genial steadfast nature,

that he never "let any one go." His hold of friends or scholars was a life grasp—tenacious, unchanging—may we say, reverently, that in this he had caught the spirit of his Divine Master, who "loved unto the end"?

The following is an extract from a letter written to an original member of this class, and is one of others written to such from time to time.

"To Mr WM. BARTON, Liverpool.

EDINBURGH, 16th *Jan.* 1889.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—Your letter of the 14th was very welcome; I was glad to hear that you are getting strong again, and it was pleasant to me to know that one of 'my boys' remembered the hours spent in the Old Close so many years ago.

"It is good for us to try to look on our life now, as we will look back on it when it is nearly over. The light of another world shed over this one makes a great change on all things. The things we fight and work for become worthless, and those we value so little become of priceless importance.

"It will be all one a hundred years hence" is true of many things and of much of our life. This thought will be useful to calm our hearts when they get fevered with this world's struggle and cares.

"You are working on in a Sabbath class. How kindly it is ordered that children are sent into the world so teachable for many years, that parents and others may train them for the better life. May God bless your work! Bring them to Christ now: nothing else will last, nor repay your labour.

"Kind regards to your wife.—Yours ever truly,

"JOHN GIFFORD."

Extracts from some letters of members, after John Gifford's death, follow naturally here.

"From Mr WM. BARTON, Liverpool.

Dec. 5th, 1895.

TO MRS GIFFORD.

" . . . The great respect and esteem in which I held Mr Gifford are more than I can express. It is now nearly fifty years since I first went to his Sunday School in the Old Assembly Close, and I still feel proud to know that I was, as he termed it, 'one of his boys.' The kindly greeting, the wise counsel he gave me during the years I attended his class and the literary society in Quarry Close I can never forget. His life was one of self-denial for the sake of others. That the God of all grace may sustain and comfort you and your loved ones in your great loss is the prayer of one whom he early led to the Saviour. . . ."

"From Mr WM. DOBSON.

EDINBURGH, *Feby. 5th*, 1896.

To Mrs GIFFORD.

". . . The literary society existing for such a length of time, and with so much enthusiasm, shewed to the fullest extent the love and trust reposed in Mr Gifford by those who had been under his care and guidance so far back as fifty years ago. Few, very few indeed, could or would have retained the respect and affection of old pupils as he did for such a length of time. . . ."

"From the Rev. COSMO GORDON,

Chetwynd Rectory,

Newport, Salop.

8th Jany. 1896.

To Mrs GIFFORD.

". . . I can look back on a knowledge of Mr Gifford for nearly half a century. What a lovely character his was! How pure and good, how noble, gentle, and yet manly. His beautiful simplicity was very attractive.

"I shall miss him till the day dawn, and we meet again. He has ever stood out to me as the most holy and Christ-like soul it has been my privilege to know. . . ."

“From the Rev. Dr SCOTT,
Free Manse, Saltcoats.

Dec. 4th, 1895.

TO MRS GIFFORD.

“ . . . It is now over half a century since, as a child in Buccleuch F.C. Sabbath School, I heard him speak on the widow and her two mites. The address was so vivid that it has remained ever since in the tablet of my memory, as if written by a pen of iron, with the point of a diamond. Afterwards he was friend and counsellor to me in the young men’s class, and I have before me still, and use, ‘Clarke’s Scripture Promises,’ which he gave me forty years ago, when I left for Glasgow.

“He has come to the grave as a shock of corn cometh in his season. He ‘rests from his labours, and his works do follow him.’ . . .”

A fellowship meeting of a private kind was begun by John Gifford in December 1840. It consisted at first only of himself and his four most intimate friends, Josiah Livingston, Wm. Whyte, Thomas Usher, and John Weir, then others were added later — John White, John M’Laren, and David Guthrie. All these names have been well known in Edinburgh.

They were then young, about his own age—nine-teen, or a little more.

A fortnightly meeting was arranged, and a plan of it is among his papers.

Its object was—

“To promote the spiritual welfare of the members and others.”

Prayer and Scripture study were its chief functions.

No records of it remain, except brief references to it in his diary. It was in existence so late as 1870, thirty years after its commencement. All its members save one are now dead.*

When John Gifford and his family removed to the Bank house in St Andrew Sq. in 1865, they attended the ministry of the Rev. Wm. Arnot. Here he undertook the children's service, held in the schoolroom every Sabbath during the afternoon service in the church. Here he was in his element. Mr Arnot used to say that he had found “an excellent colleague” in Mr Gifford, and many of the children regarded him as their personal friend.

So for many years his hands were full of work. There is no doubt that his power as a teacher was not

* The last survivor of the little band, Mr Thomas Usher, died June 30th, 1896, while these pages were in the press.

only a gift of nature, although it *was* that, but it was developed in power and enriched by constant use—by faithful effort to touch the springs of life in those to whom he spoke.

He never spoke merely to fill up the allotted time, never without a distinct aim in view, or without a carefully thought-out plan to attain it.

Many instances of success were vouchsafed to him from time to time, but the full harvest of such sowing is gathered in silence into the heavenly garner. The record of it on earth is only partial.

CHAPTER IV

CHRISTIAN WORK—*continued*

“So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done !”

THE Carrubber's Close Mission originated in the earnest mind of Mr James Gall (of Messrs Gall & Inglis). It was a mission to reclaim the dwellers massed in the closes and slums of the Canongate, Edinburgh. Of it Mr Gifford writes :—

“When the revival of 1860 came to Edinburgh the mission was moving on its proposed lines. Suddenly the prayer-meeting became a place of revival, crowds came—many were in spiritual anxiety, and more help became necessary.

“The place was the Whitfield Chapel, Carrubber's Close. It has had a strange history. It was built by Allan Ramsay for a private theatre. It was used afterward as an Episcopal chapel. Then as a meeting-place for Irvingites. Later as a hall for infidels and prize-fighters. Now it was filled with praying men and women.”

He continues—

“Mr Gall asked me to come, and I went. The whole scene was new to me ; the style of speaking, singing, praying was unusual. The second meeting was especially so. Persons were being asked about their spiritual state, and were knelt with in prayer before many on-lookers, and urged to yield in submission to Jesus Christ. It was startling, almost offensive. I remember deliberately considering “should I join or draw back ?” I found afterwards that it was only the mode, the accessory circumstances, that were peculiar, and I willingly gave what help I could.”

The time referred to was during the first of Mr Moody's visits to Edinburgh, when a wave of grace seemed to pass over the city. Carrubber's Close shared in the experience. Meetings were held there, and are still, every evening at 8.30, continuing an hour ; but in those days they could not be broken up till 10 o'clock, or even later. Many conversions took place, and, although there were disappointments, of course, the better lives of many proved the change in them to be real.

John Gifford's own account of one of these meetings will be best :—

“It was past eight o'clock, on a dark wet evening in November, when, as invited, we went to the prayer-meeting.

We passed down the crowded pavement till opposite the entrance to a steep close we were stopped by a gathering of listeners to an earnest street preacher. There might be about a score of women and girls and half as many working men and apprentices standing round the speaker. Hovering round the outside of this group were three or four lads who, as they offered a handbill to any one who might loiter near, said, 'Please go to the prayer-meeting to-night in the chapel at the foot of the close.'

"I got a handbill and went. The chapel was an old building fitted up originally in the plainest and cheapest manner. It might hold 250 persons. The gas spread a more cheerful light over it than it could have through the dingy windows during the day.

"On a platform raised six or eight inches at the upper end, behind a rough deal table, were five or six chairs. The gentleman who conducted the meeting, and who had originated the mission, occupied the centre seat, while three or four of those who assisted him sat at his side.

"The hall was nearly full. Those present were a fair sample of the population of these districts of our large cities who are openly without the profession of Christianity. Near the platform is an old woman, a well-worn tartan shawl drawn over her shoulders, serving the double purpose of warmth and concealment of a gown more worn still. She has no bonnet, and her cap is not very clean, but she has brought a pair of spectacles and an old Psalm book, and seems as much in earnest as her hard features and

dimly-lit eyes can express. But we noticed that almost all present had Bibles or Testaments.

“Right before the table, leaning on a stick, sits an old decrepit man, thin and shrivelled, his eyes rheumy and watery. He has been a waiter in one of the large hotels, and seems to have ran about till he can now only creep. Over yonder sit two strong toil-stained men, the soil of the anvil still on them. Near them a mother, with a baby at her breast, and a little boy sitting close to her: the key of her house hangs on her finger. In a recess to the left of the platform sit two girls, evidently outcasts; their gaudy wretchedness betrays them, everything about them is arranged as carefully as one would set a snare; but such outcasts were not cast out by Him.

“The middle seats are filled by a mixture of men and women, some children, and a few better dressed people.

“Near the door forms are filled with work girls who could not come sooner. Similar knots of work lads come in, and get absorbed in the meeting.

“Besides these, sprinkled over the hall, are a few Christian men and women who have taken part in the work of the mission, and are there to gather in the fruit to the Lord’s garner.

“At half-past eight the meeting begins. There is nothing remarkable in the service, except the stillness that pervades it, and the scraps of paper handed up to the chairman requesting the prayers of those present for a husband or a wife, a sister or brother, a father or mother, that they may

be brought to Christ. It is a healthful feature of the revival that those who feel its power turn instinctively to their nearest and dearest, and seek their welfare.

"There is no regular address. A few verses are read, and a few remarks made, but nothing of an exciting nature is said. At half-past nine the meeting closes. Any who wish special instruction are invited to stay; all others are requested to leave.

"After singing the single verse of the paraphrase, 'Oh! may we stand before the Lamb!' and the benediction, slowly the two hundred and fifty persons begin to retire. It is five or seven minutes before the chairman's request, that the door may be shut, is complied with, and forty or forty-five persons remain.

"That old tottering waiter has staid. Yon workmen have staid. Some women, eight or ten lads, and some fifteen or twenty girls, of from fifteen to twenty-five years of age. An elder from one of our churches is speaking to the two poor girls we noticed before. Are they anxious about their state? Gradually he remembers the face of one of them; well does she remember him—she was once his Sabbath scholar.

"There are not above eight or ten persons who will venture to speak to these enquirers; they cannot be dealt with individually, so they are grouped together, three or four assigned to each, and a solemn and interesting scene begins.

"The chairman turns to the Bible and reads the promise. 'They shall look on Me whom they have pierced, and mourn.' He asks are there any here who earnestly desire

to know Christ? This promise is for *them*. Let them take it to God. Are there any here who know that they are sinners, but do not feel their sins? This promise is for *them*. Let them plead it with God. They all kneel, and earnestly the blessing is sought. After three minutes the voice of the chairman ceases, and he says, 'Now, I will not lead your prayers ; let each one silently pray for himself.' All is hushed to a deeper stillness, and we trust many hearts rise to God who never sought Him before.

"After they rise from prayer, each teacher turns to his group and seeks to give them direction and help.

"There is a good deal of bitter weeping, chiefly among the girls, and group after group are seen bending in prayer with the friend who seeks to guide them.

"No one can know what goes on in these various circles, but the scene is a solemn one, and makes one feel that 'God is in this place.'

"After an hour the chairman raises a psalm, it is caught up over the room, and, after a short prayer, the service is over ; but frequently it is much later before the last enquirer leaves the hall.

"With humble gratitude to God for all that we had seen, and praying for a yet richer blessing, we returned home."

Mr Jenkinson, of sainted memory, was at that time giving his whole spare strength to the Carrubber's Close Mission. To relieve him John Gifford took

the meeting on Tuesday evenings; and from 1861 till his health began to fail in 1895 he was always there.

Many of the addresses in his notebooks were prepared for it.

He writes of the Mission :—

“The work at Carrubber’s Close has always been interesting to me—deeply so. It is a border-land between the world’s territory and Christ’s, where the fight has to be fought and where souls must be won. Many, many a one has Christ gained to Himself there.”

In an ordinary congregation of respectable, fairly well-to-do people there is a monotony of outward fitness which dulls sympathy. There is nothing to call it forth. All is fair and well-seeming. Are these “sinners as others” are? Are *they* weary and heavy laden? We know that they are—that some, even of these, are sick with sin, weary to death of a world that can never satisfy. There are always “broken hearts in purple rare;” but these secrets are not written on the surface.

In a mission like Carrubber’s Close it is different. There is usually a sprinkling of ordinary looking

people, but a large number have, written on them legibly, the history of the years—struggle, poverty, hunger, drink—beauty defiled, and manhood crushed in hopelessness—that is the frequent story.

Mr Gifford sits behind the desk, on a Tuesday evening, waiting after the first hymn has been sung, for the groups that come in, drawn from the street by the kindly insistence of those who do this part of the work. His watchful look of pity and longing once seen is printed on the memory.

The stragglng newcomers find seats as they enter ; they look battered and comfortless, as those who have been worsted in the battle of life. The women have no bonnets ; the men are unkempt and spiritless, with no heart, apparently, for work or anything else.

The teacher reads a few verses of the Book, and then tells, with no doubtful speech, of rest and help and comfort, even for them. "Better days"—a Saviour from sin—a possible new beginning—a fresh start in life to be taken *now*, by the help of Jesus Christ.

Then follow the simple, earnest prayer and the closing hymn. But the work does not close there. Even although the great revival has passed, on most

evenings there are still cases of need or anxiety to be attended to. John Gifford was easy of access, his very look was an invitation, and he was often sought by his humble friends. One evening a man comes up to the desk, he wishes to take the pledge. His wife has brought him, and her eager look as she listened to the address, *for another*, was touching to see. "He's going to sign to-night, Mr Gifford," and the voice told of years of sorrow, and of a new trembling hope. Another, a woman comes and says she "has no home and no money, nowhere to sleep to-night." A kind helper in the mission comes forward. "I will take her home to-night," she says, "and to-morrow we will see what to do."

One evening a working man draws Mr Gifford aside. He has been in prison. On coming out found his way to Carrubber's Close; found friends there, too, who got him work, and he had resolved to begin an honest life. He says, "Mr Gifford, I am come to tell you that I cannot stand it. My mates won't speak to me, they all scorn me because I have been in prison. I am miserable. There's nothing for it but to go back to my old life."

Patiently he is reasoned with—told, "you know,

after all, you have brought this on yourself." "But you won't give up, in a little while it will be forgotten. You will live it down. Promise me that you will hold on, and seek the Saviour's help," and the man goes away with some new courage.

Or it is a poor wretched woman, weak in mind and body; one such haunted him at the mission, followed him, always miserable, always asking. But he never wearied of any one. Going down the stairs from the hall one evening, he came up with the poor creature. He laid his hand kindly on her shoulder, "Well, Mary, how are you to-night?" A flood of sorrows was about to be poured out. Mr Gifford turned to the good care-taker of the Mission premises. "Here, Downie, *this is a friend of mine*. Will you attend to her for me? See that she has all she wants to-night." So time after time the varied needs are met. "Inas-much as ye do it to one of the least of these."

After the death of Mr Jenkinson in 1886, Mr Gifford was asked to take charge of the large Bible class of young women which he had gathered and taught. He could now leave the school in Quarry Close under the care of his son-in-law, Mr Andrew Scott, his son,

Mr Adam Gifford, and Mr John Boyd. After some consideration he agreed to the proposal.

He taught this class for twelve years. Some recollections from two members of the class, who were there during all or most of that time, will give the best idea of his methods.

Miss Lear writes :—

“The class was attended not only by young women, but by many who were advanced in years, and who felt it a great privilege to come. He took an individual interest in each member, and frequently gave out the intimation that, if any of them were in difficulty or wanted advice, he would only be too glad to help them. He gave help in many ways, sometimes he got situations for the girls, sometimes gave pecuniary assistance, often it was spiritual advice they desired, and many of them by his means were led to the Saviour. He did not like them to be shy of him, but was always pleased when they spoke to him, and he took great pains to know all their names.

“No one was better fitted than he to give comfort to sick or bereaved ones. He always seemed to be able to say just the right thing.

“He did not have a large selection of hymns at our meetings, and he generally said a few words about the hymn before it was sung. One young woman was aroused to serious thought by his remarks on the hymn, ‘Oh! the

clanging bells of time.' She never forgot the solemn words he spoke on 'Eternity.'

"One of his favourite hymns was 'The sands of time are sinking, the dawn of heaven breaks,' that he always called Mr Jenkinson's hymn. When he was in Africa he heard for the first time 'Thou art coming, O my Saviour.' He was impressed by it, and always said that the Kaffirs sang it better than the class. . . .

"He drew his lessons from everything; from flowers, trees, the insect world, and from human life. They were rich lessons, and were so vividly given that they could not be easily forgotten. One address on 'The Coming of the Bridegroom' was especially blessed to more than one member of his class. He delivered it again in the Free Assembly Hall in October 1874, and it produced a great impression.

"His farewell on leaving the class was on the words 'Stand fast,' and his thought ran thus:—

Stand fast to Duty.

Stand fast in Temptation.

Stand fast to Christ.

He never forgot them, although he had ceased to be their teacher.

"For some time some of the girls banded themselves together to lead the singing in Mr Gifford's Tuesday evening meetings at Carrubber's Close. They loved to be there, and were steadfast in coming, and he often spoke a word of

thanks and encouragement to them, which they appreciated. This meeting was always especially helpful to young Christians. His earnestness struck them much. They have often said that while the hymn was sung Mr Gifford looked as if he were really in heaven."

We all realised that he "walked with God."

Mrs Smith of Methven, *née* Miss Dewar, writes:—

"I had the pleasure of knowing Mr Gifford as deacon and elder in the church well-nigh fifty years ago. In these earlier and in subsequent years I had occasion sometimes to call his attention to cases of deep distress, and I found him always ready to help. His purse was always open if needed. Often has the burden been lifted from my heart when Mr Gifford went with me to visit a desolate home.

"In his class many a precious lesson have I learned from him; lessons which became part of myself, principles within, to guide my daily life.

"As a personal friend I shall miss him much. He had a way of his own which took the feet from your troubles, if they were only imaginary. With a slight rebuke he made you ashamed of being moved by trifles. If they were real, he did all he could to relieve you, and dispel your fears.

"I remember a New Year's Address many years ago. He said that the years did not pass away—they *grew into* your life. He spoke of the rings you see in a tree when cut down; each ring is a year's growth, and you can tell by the

wood of each ring what kind of year it has been. I thought that thenceforth I would seek that the years of my life should, each after each, bear witness to the transforming power of the Spirit of God."

Some letters in connection with this class find a place here naturally.

Mr Gifford wrote them during his voyage to Africa, and his absence there, in 1882-3. He went to visit his son, who had gone, years before, to that continent in search of health.

"S.S. *The Moor*.

"To Miss DEWAR.

"This is the 11th of November, and the ship is off the coast of Africa, about 200 miles north of Cape Verde. We are going swiftly and smoothly along, at 13 knots an hour, over a beautiful summer sea.

"There is a great circle of deep blue water round us, and we are in the centre, not a sail to be seen. The wind is N.-E., a trade-wind, just enough to fleck the blue with white, and to fill our sails. . . .

"It is not like your world at Edinburgh. I find it very pleasant, and I am very well. I can imagine the mist and cold in your streets. You would be much the better of breathing this air for a month. And so would a number of my good friends. I wish I could transport them here.

"This is a large vessel, some 320 feet by 42, and is

engined by some 3500 horse-power. The engine is wrought by twenty-seven men, and if you saw the dark stifling place where they work, 50 feet under deck, you would feel how much it costs to keep the ladies and gentlemen above, in comfort and ease. It is, I fear, the same everywhere. There is no comfort or ease but is purchased at like cost. So it is too with our life; the outward life cannot be kept pure and beautiful without *stoking*. Let us not shrink from the inward work.

“Yesterday I saw a little bird in the rigging like a canary. He had slender black legs and bill, and yellow feathers shaded with darker ones. Poor thing, he must have flown some fifty miles from the African shore, aided by the wind. But he will never be able to fly back. He must go with us 3000 miles to the Cape. Some sea-birds were near us too, but they have strong wings, and can easily reach the land.

“This morning we saw flying-fish, which we have often read about. One flew right over the ship. They cannot fly if their wings get dry. It was so stormy last Sabbath that we could not meet for service, but there is plenty of leisure, and on the upper deck in early morning it was delightful to join our distant friends in praise and prayer.

“We have 250 souls on board, and can do little for them except pray for them. The poor sailor boys have a hard time of it. Early and late—Saturday and Sabbath—always working. They need a friend much, but it is not easy to befriend them, you never see them alone. . . .

"Yesterday at three o'clock we had a service of sacred song. A few of us sang the old hymns with much pleasure. I could join with my heart if not with my voice. We can always unite in hymns—all our differences are forgotten.

"The time changes with our longitude. We have lost an hour by going west. But I keep my watch at Edinburgh time, and at five o'clock on Sabbath afternoon I can join you in praise and prayer. . . .

"To my dear friends in the class, what can I say? Shall I warn them not to be like the flying-fish? Some people's religion lifts them up only for a short time, and then they sink down, to be 'like their neighbours,' and rise no more.

"Or shall the poor birds, driven by some wind from the shore, warn us to resist the temptation that drifts us away from self-denying duty, and from Christ, over the dark sea of sin, never to return?

"Rather I would send them this message—

'Run the race, looking unto Jesus!'

I don't forget Mr Cairns and my Tuesday companions.—
Yours always truly,

JOHN GIFFORD."

"NOODSBURG, NATAL,
30th Dec. 1882.

"To Mr WILLIAM DICKSON.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is pleasant, very pleasant, when Sabbath comes round, and my thoughts fly to meet my friends in the class-room—to think of you being there. I

not only have no anxiety about the class, but I feel that my absence will be an advantage to them, because it brings to them you and all your experience. We have been a month in Natal, and enjoyed it much. I am now quite well, and my daughter is strong and merry. The meeting with my dear son, his wife, and his little boy was a joyful one. We met them at the Impolweenia Mission-house, Mr Scott's. My son and his wife are well, but not so vigorous as my little grandson. He is a jolly little fellow, tall for his age, two months, and fat and strong.*

"The mission work at Impolweenie was very interesting to me. Mr Scott was in business for the first part of his life, and made a small fortune. He knows the Kaffirs and their language well, and resolved to take ordination as a missionary to them. He has now a church built near his house, which will hold 400 people, and all the village is under his influence. I did not see the school, it was vacation time, but I went on Wednesday to the prayer meeting. There were seventy present—men, women, and a few children. It is pleasant to hear the old tunes sung to Kaffir hymns in the worship of our Lord and Saviour.

"I was at a meeting of session; Mr Scott had seven elders, all black, with woolly heads, sitting mostly on the floor, intelligent and cheery. They consider and act together in regard to all church and mission matters.

"On Sabbath, December 17th, my son had his little boy baptised. At the same time there were baptised also a girl-

* He was named *John Gifford*, and died when four years old.

baby—a niece of Mrs James Gifford, three Kaffir babies, and one boy four years old. There was a large congregation of 250 or 300—all black. . . . Sitting there I thought what a glorious, God-like Gospel it is that includes the little ones. No false religion or philosophy ever took infants into its care. Then it was beautiful to see our little white bairns and the African black ones received into one Church, into the arms of one Saviour. It seemed an earnest of the time when ‘all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues, shall ascribe honour and glory and praise to Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb.’ . . .

“Here at Noodsburg we are surrounded by Kaffirs, and there is no teacher. They are totally ignorant, and we cannot speak to them. They have hardly any idea of God, the soul, or sin. But Jesus Christ cares for them. . . .

“I enjoyed a new hymn very much the other Sabbath, and learned it. Please commend it to my dear friends at the class. It is No. 342, ‘Thou art coming, oh! my Saviour.’ I would like to hear them sing it. He may come very soon. Is it not a good test of the state of our hearts if they can join in such a strain—if they love His appearing? . . .

“I am writing long letters home, and I have no time now to tell you about Africa. If you saw me in a ‘*spider*’ drawn by six black oxen all day long, two naked black fellows with me, one to lead, and one with a long whip acting as driver, the girls would have such a laugh. But for such descriptions I must wait till I get home. Thanks

for this service to my class. Kindly read this letter to them. And may God bless you and them exceedingly.—
Yours always, JOHN GIFFORD.”

Extract.

“MARCHMONT, NATAL,
10th Jany. 1883.

“TO MISS LEAR and Miss DEWAR.

“ . . . The new hall * will be beginning to rear its head, and I trust the Lord will build up His temple with living stones. . . .

“My son has a large farm of 3000 acres. It has on it two large hills and two or three wide valleys. The hills are beautifully green just now, and the cattle are scattered over them.

“The Sabbath here is very quiet. The colonists don't work on it, and all the Kaffirs have a holiday. . . .

“There are three kraals on the farm, each kraal consisting of from four to six huts, with two or three families distributed in them. The huts are made of branches of trees, straw, and clay, and are like big bee-hives. They have no windows and no furniture, only a fire and a pot in the centre. . . .

“One of the chiefs had a great dance on Monday. An ox was killed and beer made from millet seed. All the morning Kaffirs in full dress were seen wandering on the

* Through the influence and kind help of Mr Moody, new mission buildings were erected in 1883 near the old Whitfield Chapel.

hills going to the kraal. Full dress consists chiefly of strings of beads and feathers. It is light, cool, and durable. . . .”

Mr Gifford retired from his work in this class in 1892. In the end of 1893 he was also obliged to go less regularly to his Tuesday evening meeting at the Close; still, he went when he could, sometimes through rain and cold; and also sometimes to the noon meeting there. He still looked vigorous, his step was still elastic, and his spirit bright as ever, but he felt that he reached the limit of his strength sooner than ever before. He loved the Carrubber's Close Mission. The work there, and those who carried it on, had to the last a place very near his heart.

Mr Robertson, superintendent of the mission, wrote to Mrs Gifford two days after her husband's death—“The friends in Carrubber's Close feel a common interest with you in your departed husband; he belonged so much to us during these many blessed years. . . .” On one of the last days—I think the last—that he was present at the noon meeting, the chairman gave an address on the Love of God. During the second part of the meeting Mr Gifford

made a few remarks, expressing his wonder how any one could resist such love. In closing, he repeated a verse from the third hymn in "Songs and Solos."

"Oh ! if there is only one song I can sing,
When in his beauty I see the Great King ;
This shall my song in eternity be—
Oh ! what a wonder that Jesus loves me."

The vision of "the King" was at hand.

Mr Robt. B. Blyth has kindly contributed some recollections of the closing work of Mr Gifford's life.

He writes—

"Though acquainted with Mr Gifford during my boyhood, I was by no means intimate with him. We attended different schools, and did not meet in our youthful games. My first years past, I left Edinburgh for a residence of five years in Fife. Then came the period of my studies at the University and Divinity Hall, and this was followed by six years absence from Scotland, when I was a missionary in India."

Mr Blyth goes on to say that he and Mr Gifford were brought together at the time of the formation of the Edinburgh Sabbath School Union, and the subsequent Annual Conventions before referred to. . . .

He continues—

“My closest connection with my honoured and esteemed friend was a thing of comparatively recent date. . . . When beloved Mr Jenkinson was called home, Mr Gifford stepped in to conduct the large Bible class of young women over which that man of God had so admirably presided. Into this congenial work he threw himself with devoted ardour, and many consecrated lives have sprung from his connection with that class.

“But as years rolled on he found the work of conducting the class too much for his failing strength. He found the long walk from his home to the Canongate burdensome, and after due consideration, he resolved to sever his connection with the class. Such a determination was not arrived at without prayerful thought, it cost him an effort and a pang. But the step had to be taken and it was.

“Though thus set free from an onerous engagement, Mr Gifford did not wish to rest on his oars, and looked round to see in what other direction he could work for Christ among the young. . . .

“Putting himself in communication with the Rev. T. Currie, of Warrender Park Free Church, he offered his services for work amongst the young. The result was that he was requested to help me in conducting the senior Bible class there, and so for some two years we became affectionate yoke-fellows. The class consisted of both young

men and young women. The average attendance was about fifty.

"Our simple plan was that on alternate Sabbaths he occupied the first half-hour, I the second. On the intervening Sabbath this order was reversed.

"It was on these occasions, very precious to me, that I had abundant opportunity of watching and profiting by my dear friend's valuable and impressive teaching.

"When he rose to begin, two things were evident—that he was full of his subject, and that he entered on the work before him with solemnity and yet with joyousness, because the duty was to him a pleasant one. The Gospel, through a large part of which he led the class, was that of Matthew. Almost always there was a brief reference to the last day's lesson, a kind of revisal, which was exceedingly useful. Then, when he entered on the passage for the day, it was manifest that he had reverently pondered it.

"His was a judicial intellect, and when it was brought to bear on portion after portion of the Word of God, the outcome was grand. Divine truth was brought home to the lives and consciences of his young hearers in a very intense way. The eager look of all present, and the silence that prevailed, told eloquently that his words were going home to their hearts.

"His knowledge of men, and of the commercial world, and his very varied experience in Carrubber's Close, were all turned to good account. Apt anecdotes helped to wing home the arrows that came from his quiver. At times a

bright, happy smile, peculiarly his own, irradiated his face, and from his eyes gleamed out a deep love for the young people whom he sought to win to Jesus Christ. It is solemnising and sad to think that all this is past, but he has left a holy impress on many young lives, and he is with that Lord whom he loved and faithfully served."

Perhaps if there is one feature more striking than another in John Gifford's very evenly moulded character it is his *staying power*. Once convinced that a certain work was good and useful, he never turned aside from it. Hence there was in all he did a cumulative force, which achieved much in the end. The term of his connection with one and another of the branches of Christian work must be measured not by years but by decades.

And he worked on to the end. Writing to me about his class in Warrender Park in the autumn of 1895, he said emphatically, "It is my last piece of work." It was, although at the time I did not believe it.

He was there on the fourth Sabbath before his death, when our hopes revived, and we thought he was about to shake off his weakness. Like a gleaner

in the darkening field, his hand was still busy gathering the precious grain, when the shadows grew long and the night fell.

“Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing.”

CHAPTER V

BUSINESS LIFE

“So did'st thou travel on Life's common road,
In cheerful godliness.”

Wordsworth.

PERHAPS it might be thought that, as John Gifford gave so much energy to some departments of Christian work, he might be but an indifferent or half-hearted man of business. But it was not so. He put all his strength into his work in the Bank. It was monotonous enough during the years that he was one of the tellers, employed all day in counting money, but when later he was appointed cashier, the daily business was more interesting. He did his work well, and his superiors learned to trust him. He was still but a lad when he was asked to sleep in the Bank-house, when the Secretary was absent during the summer holidays, with the responsibilities which that involved.

After he had been some years in the Bank, he was told privately by one of the then directors that some of that body thought he was giving too much of his spare time to religious work. They thought his doing so must affect his duty in his daily business. His friend also said that this might also interfere with his promotion. No motive of that kind could move John Gifford from a course which he considered right, and he diminished his religious work not one whit, but addressed himself with redoubled diligence to his duty in the Bank.

His religion, and the religious work he did, could his objectors have only known it, gave needed change of thought, and lent fresh vitality to even the dry details of his Bank routine. Besides, no one can do anything *well* in the best sense, if he does or can do nothing else. To have wider interests and nobler cares reacts on the business of the hour, and brings to it a borrowed impulse of power.

Step by step, he rose in his profession; his genial manner made customers ask for "Mr Gifford," and many a kindly word was spoken and friendly greeting given to business visitors who came to the mahogany sanctum shut off from the Telling

room, where he was to be found during Bank hours.

He never obtruded religion on his fellow-workers ; but he thought about them, cared for their interests, and was always ready to help them to improve their position in life. He had, as some one says, a very "genius for kindness" in things small or great.

One young man in the Bank was, he saw, drifting into intemperate habits, and he set himself to save him if possible. To do this he made *a friend* of him, and so could throw all the influence which that means into the wavering life. He would slip his arm into that of the youth and go with him on the way to his home when the Bank closed. The effort was successful, and the friendship lasted till the death of its recipient.

During these first years in the Bank we find that John Gifford kept a time-table in which every hour of each day is accounted for. Lenient and gentle in his relations to others, to himself he was ever a strict and merciless censor.

We give a specimen of this table—a record of one week.

1842.	Sleep.	Work.	Devotion.	Study.	Miscellaneous.
Aug. 27	6	$8\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$5\frac{1}{2}$
" 29	$6\frac{1}{4}$	$11\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$2\frac{1}{4}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$
" 30	$6\frac{1}{4}$	$11\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{4}$	$2\frac{1}{4}$	$3\frac{1}{4}$
" 31	$6\frac{1}{2}$	—	$1\frac{1}{4}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	$14\frac{1}{4}$
Sept. 1	8	8	$1\frac{1}{4}$	$2\frac{1}{2}$	$3\frac{1}{4}$
" 2	6	$8\frac{1}{2}$	$1\frac{1}{2}$	2	6
Total,	39	48	$9\frac{3}{4}$	$11\frac{1}{2}$	$35\frac{3}{4}$

Daily solid reading was persevered in all through his life, and by careful use of the fragments he found time for everything. He was one of those who never *seemed* busy, never hurried, or in a rush. Calm and steady, like a river in a plain, his life flowed on. Of his fifty years of business life there is little to record. How little, after all, of any life can be noted! A few incidents stand out; the long stretch of years must be passed by with a word. But as he used to impress on his auditors, the years, unnoted, still write their own record into the life, the monotony of their ceaseless grind *tells* on character.

One or two incidents in his life at the Bank may be of interest. We quote from his journal:—

“It was in the spring of 1862 that one morning the letters in the post-box were found to contain some dozen and a half of the bank’s 20s. notes from different towns in England. The notes were new, and evidently of the latest date. On closer inspection the signatures were found to be forgeries. . . .

“The course of post brought a letter from the Bank’s engravers, in London telling that, on examination of the supply of notes ready to be sent to Edinburgh, three books, each containing 500 notes, were missing.

“Accordingly the notes which had come in by post were returned, marked ‘forgeries,’ and those presented at the note exchange were refused. A circular letter of warning, describing the notes, was sent far and wide. Still, from distant towns the notes came in rapidly.

“The police were put on the track, and in a week, or less, news came that there were prisoners in London, Dublin, and Cork accused of issuing forged notes. But the charge must be laid, and some one bound over to prosecute. I got instructions to be ready to go in the interest of the Bank whenever required.”

Mr Gifford had to travel twice to Ireland on this occasion, and to give evidence at Dublin, London, and Cork.

He writes—

“When the Irish trials came on (July 1862), Messrs Bacon, Warren, and myself set out for the Cork assize.

Mr Bacon was head partner of the engraving firm, Mr Warren was one of those who signed the notes; Mr John Murray, solicitor, joined us at Dublin to conduct the case.

“We took rooms in the Royal Hotel, Cork. The assize was attended by a number of barristers from Dublin, apparently for the sake of some expected fun, for they had nothing to do in Court. They dined with the Judge the evening before the assize. The dinner was a festive one, and about two or three o'clock in the morning the young barristers carried Judge —— shoulder-high upstairs to his bedroom, with shouts of hip-hip hooray! Of course the noise awoke every one.

“A Cork assize is a celebrated occasion for many things besides justice, and draws crowds from all the country round. The Court was like a large church; the Judge sat in a seat like a pulpit; the galleries were filled with people.

“Messrs Bacon and Warren were first examined. Then my turn came. I was questioned by the counsel for the accused. ‘You know the notes of the National Bank of Scotland?’ ‘You know the signatures of those who sign them?’ ‘Do they always sign in the same manner?’ ‘After dinner are their signatures the same as before dinner,’ &c.”

A conviction was easily got against some ten or twelve persons.

Afterwards Mr Gifford visited Killarney on his way

home, and at Dublin the news reached him of his father's death on July 27th, 1862. It was a great sorrow to him that he could not be present to get a farewell from his father, especially as he had, when the end drew near, expressed a strong desire to see his son.

One of the most important successes of John Gifford's business life was his share in the formation of the Banker's Institute of Scotland. The idea was new to the profession, and at first was not encouraged by some of the leading bankers in Scotland. However, patience and resolve overcame opposition, and the Institute took shape, and ultimately proved its *raison d'être*.

A quotation from the "History of Banking in Scotland," by Mr A. W. Kerr, Royal Bank, Edinburgh, will best explain how the Institute originated. He says—

"Up to the time of the formation of the Institute of Bankers in Scotland, the education of bankers in the theory and practice of their profession, nay, even the ascertainment of their most ordinary educational acquirements, was of the most hap-hazard description. No effort was made to induce young bankers

to attain anything beyond a superficial knowledge of details."

Mr Kerr suggested, in an article which appeared in the *Money Market Review* in May 1874, that some systematic action should be taken for the better training of young bankers, and that a system of examinations should be established, in connection with which certificates would be issued to the best students.

Mr Kerr goes on to say :—

"It is highly probable that these suggestions would not have produced any practical result, had not the idea been taken up by a gentleman possessing the influence and energy necessary for conducting it to a successful issue. To Mr John Gifford, late cashier of the National Bank of Scotland, belongs the credit of inaugurating and effectively conducting the desired reformation."

In a letter dated March 4th, 1896, Mr Kerr writes :
"Mr Gifford and I were most intimately associated with the origination and establishment of the Banker's Institute of Scotland, and no one knows so well as I the amount of thought, time and labour which he devoted to it in these early days, when it had few friends and many enemies ; and the untiring steadfastness

with which he pressed on—not *fought*—against the pride and prejudice opposed to the project.”

The Institution thus laboriously established is now in vigorous condition, and well fulfils the object of its founders.

In the last report of the Institute in 1895, the total number connected with it is announced as 1077, and all the machinery of classes, examinations, &c., are in full activity. We quote from the report :—

“The value of the training imparted by the Institute may be seen from the fact that Foreign and Colonial banks have recognised the diplomas of the Institute by offering, within recent years, positions to the holders of them.

“Mr John Gifford, who from the first has been identified with the Institution, has kindly offered two prizes of £10, 10s. and £5, 5s. respectively in the essay competition of 1895-96, and has left the selection of the subjects to the Council.”

Mr Gifford was remarkably open to sudden impulses of duty, and never felt bound to follow the letter in his business, if by so doing the spirit was overborne.

An instance of this may be given.

Once, during the later years of his life in the Bank, a young man came and presented a cheque from Glasgow to be cashed. Mr Gifford looked at him and saw that he was not sober. He at once refused to cash the cheque, saying, "I will send it to Glasgow, and you will get the money there to-morrow." The young man objected, but Mr Gifford was firm. It was sent to Glasgow accordingly.

A year after, on Christmas Eve, a young man called at Mr Gifford's house in Marchmont Terrace. It was the same to whom he had refused the money. He said, "Mr Gifford, you once did me a kindness; will you do me another? I am in the same condition in which I was then. I have been robbed of my greatcoat, my watch, and my money. I want to get home to Glasgow; will you give me enough for the journey? It shall be repaid."

Mr Gifford said he would, adding, "I will meet you at the train and pay your fare." He did so, and procured also some food from the refreshment room. In a day or two the sum was returned, accompanied by a touching letter from the poor fellow's mother.

Mr Gifford's connection with the Bank ended in 1883. It seemed early to retire, but his services had

extended over nearly fifty years, some changes were being made, and for various reasons it seemed a fitting time. His friends feared that he would feel the blank in his life too much ; but it was not so. Business had never been all in all to him, and now that he was free, he had many other interests in life. The years after his retirement were very happy. The evening had come, but it came, in his case, with a golden glow of light, more beautiful than the sunny noon.

His fellow-workers in the Bank presented him with a silver salver in token of their regard and wishes that he might long enjoy his well-earned rest.

He still continued to take part in the direction of various Companies, and was chairman of one or more.

He was often consulted by friends on financial matters, and his judgment was usually sound. Those whose monetary affairs he had in charge, as trustee or otherwise, knew how invariably his choice for them was right and safe. It almost amounted to an intuition.

Having joined the Merchant Company in 1849, he was elected in 1878 to the office of Assistant, and in 1885 to the Treasurership. In 1886 he was chosen

Master—the highest position in the Company—and was re-elected the following year.

Just forty-six years before, in 1840, his father, Mr James Gifford, had been Master of the Company.

After his retirement in 1889, Mr Gifford gave his services and experience on the Boards of the Company's schools, and the Widows' Fund, &c., and represented the Company in the management of the Royal Infirmary.

Besides these, he was on the Committee of the Destitute Sick Society, the Magdalene Asylum, the House of Refuge, and the City Mission. It was not his habit to be only a nominal member. He always gave his time and thought when he gave his name.

CHAPTER VI

MARRIAGE AND HOME

“Go make thy garden fair as thou canst,
Thou workest never alone ;
Perchance he whose plot is next to thine
Will see it and mend his own.”

Mrs Charles.

“IF you would know a man as he is, see him at home.” There, if anywhere, John Gifford was at his best.

In 1848 he became engaged to Mary, youngest daughter of Mr Andrew Usher, merchant, Edinburgh. She was one of a family of four sons and seven daughters. Hers was a happy Christian home.

In 1849 he was receiving still only a very moderate salary from the Bank, and the two fathers and mothers of the young couple felt that it was somewhat of a venture to begin a home on so slender an income. A family council was held on the subject, and the decision was arrived at that the marriage might take place.

Both had simple tastes, and no desire for a life of idle luxury, and further postponement seemed undesirable.

A house was found in Sylvan Place, close to the open ground of the Meadows, and on August 22nd the marriage took place. A sister of the bride was married on the same day, and a number of friends and relatives were present.

John Gifford and his bride spent their holiday at Brig o' Turk, near Callander, at the same little inn where, years before, the accident on the river Teith occurred.

The landlady, Mrs Ferguson, hesitated to receive them, saying she never "took" ladies. However, as she considered that this one was, as she said, "a by-ordinar lady," she consented, and all parties were pleased. A boat on the loch was set apart for their use, and the holiday weeks sped fast.

Memory retains a picture of the evening when, for the first time, they entered on their new home. The cake of shortbread, wrapped in a napkin, was duly broken by the bridegroom's mother, over the head of the bride, token of plenty and prosperity! Relatives and friends were there to welcome them; supper

was prepared, songs were sung, and stories told.

At ten o'clock the large new family Bible was brought, and our father gave out the 2nd Paraphrase : "O God of Bethel." It has always been sung in our family at the "partings of the ways." The beautiful verse rose and fell, with a thrill in it—

"O spread Thy cov'ring wings around,
Till all our wand'rings cease."

It is a prayer fulfilled—for most of those who were present there.

Our father then prayed "that the new home might be a Bethel, a house of God, and that the united lives might be lived in and for Him."

It was a beautiful beginning to the life-journey, which went on for forty-six happy years.

Next morning, life began in earnest. Bank at nine o'clock. Evenings busy with meetings of various kinds. Spare hours filled with preparation of the "Notes for Teachers," solid reading, and some social engagements. His wife was a helpmeet indeed, and entered into all her husband's labours with a warm sympathy. She had a beautiful voice, and her

singing was to him and many others a continual pleasure. This he could enjoy, although he could not himself sing a note. He felt it very inconvenient that he could not raise the tune for hymn or psalm at his classes or Sunday-school. With infinite pains he managed to learn two tunes (I think they were *Devizes* and *Artaxerxes*), and could sing them, not well, but just so as to raise them on an emergency. His efforts to master this modest acquirement were a great amusement to his friends and to himself.

At the end of five years a little daughter was born, Margaret. Her advent was warmly welcomed. By-and-bye other children followed, James, John, Adam, and Mary.

John Gifford was in his element with children. To his own children he was father, friend, and play-fellow, all in one. His constant cheerfulness and bright talk charmed them, and he had endless fun and frolic in his nature. When at Arran, his little niece Katie Raleigh and he used to be sent out of doors to romp and shout—their boisterous games were too much for the peace-loving inmates of the cottage.

The Sabbath day was no dull day for his children,

or grandchildren, for it was the day on which he could talk to them and tell them Bible stories, which, told by him, always were made vivid and real. One on each knee, and one at his feet, he could hold them enchained—open-eyed and open-mouthed—till the sigh at the end was followed by the quick request, “Another, please.”

All young people loved him. One relative writes—“My remembrance of ‘Uncle John’ extends over many years, and is one of the most vivid and fondly cherished of my life. . . . His loving smile, his warm welcome, his unfailing cheeriness, and a subtle magnetic sympathy, made us ever delight to be with him.

“Above all, it was his daily walk with God that had an unconscious influence for good, difficult to define, but deeply felt in our hearts. And his prayers—no one ever made me realise as he did, that we were close to the Father. . . . These prayers, and the tones of his dear voice, will echo in my heart as long as I live.”

Family prayer, or, to use the old Scotch expression, *Worship*, was with him a true Communion Service. He seemed to speak face to face with the

King, and those who heard him, children and friends and servants, were drawn with him into the royal presence.

Can we ever estimate the power of such prayers as his? Far and wide, and down the generations, the answer will fall in endless benediction.

Letter to the Rev. J. M. JARVIE of Greenock.

“ . . . You will find yourself standing firm in your pulpit now, and may the Lord stand by you !

“ When we look on those whom we are trying to teach or rouse, we are apt to think of them as subjects *on whom* we must work, who are *passive*. We forget that they possess all the faculties to make active agents in similar work. Instead of seeing them as so many individuals whom we must benefit, would it not be truer to see in them those who can benefit others? . . .

“ It is needless to say that you really secure the greatest possible blessing to those who come directly in contact with you, if you make them agents in blessing others.

“ If you see four or five hundred persons listening to you on Sabbath, you may see thus, by faith, four or five thousand, on whom all your words may tell. Four or five thousand, do I say? Rather ‘a multitude that no man can number.’ Who can calculate the extent of moral influence, or measure the length of a stream that flows through eternity? . . .

"I do think this result is attainable in some measure; but it does demand high qualifications in the *centre agent*. You would need to stand firm if you are to set in motion so heavy a machinery around you. . . ."

To Mrs ALEX. RALEIGH, on her marriage.

"2 SYLVAN PLACE, 13th Aug. 1841.

"Where can my thoughts be but where my dear sister and brother are? I don't care where it is, for I am there. I know it will be in the sunshine, where the plant of immortal happiness delights to grow.

"I shall never forget the smile and the last glance of the eye I caught at Dublin Street, before the carriage moved away yesterday afternoon. It was a benevolent return for the shower of old shoes! When you were gone, we soon found ourselves again in the drawing-room, everyone feeling that he had lost something, and as if to seek it, we all began to stream downstairs to the dining-room, where, alas! we only found a cold collation.

"I wish I could give you some account of the joyful sympathy that pervaded the company. I wish I could sketch dear father at the foot of the table, standing up, the programme card in his hand. He was pale, but firm, and when his voice got out, and he thought of the Queen, and not of you, he spoke well.

"When he rose to reply to Samuel Raleigh's health of mother and himself, he was paler still, and trembled a little,

but he controlled himself, and looking steadily round the table, he thanked the guests for their presence and their kindness. 'It was vain to say they would not miss you; they would miss you as each day began, and as each day closed, but they felt you were not lost, only gone where you would be useful and happy.'

"Mother at the other end of the table was looking a little flushed, but trying to cover all with a smile of assent. . . .

"When the last guest had gone, we were again in the drawing-room, mother sitting on the sofa just where you did. 'Still we are five, remember,' someone said; 'here we are, let us have a kiss all round.' So we sealed up the broken circle with kisses. . . . Even Adam submitted, and he is not willing to be kissed!

"We then did some necessary work, such as sending newspaper notices, posting letters, &c., and by half-past nine we had wheeled mother's chair round to the tea-table, and again made a little family circle, and had tea and worship. . . .

"Now, I must stop. I can never finish all I have to say to one so dear, and whose heart and mind echo my thoughts and feelings, and unlike other echoes, improve them all.—
Your loving brother,
"JOHN."

In 1864, John Alexander, his second son, four years old, died of diphtheria. It was a sudden illness, and for a few days it seemed as if the child would surmount the disease. It was touching to see how he

would play with his father, quite cheerfully, in ignorance of his parents' deep anxiety. He died in June 1864.

Soon after, the family went to Callander, and there Adam, the third son, was attacked in the same way. He was a little boy of three. Instead of shutting him up in one room, his parents took him out to drive, and were hours in the open air. From that time he began to recover.

Years after, when the youngest child, Mary, had diphtheria, this experience was remembered. Her father took her, while still very ill, out into the air, and they drove out round Arthur Seat. The improvement begun then was maintained, and she recovered.

Dr Raleigh died in April 1880.

The following letters were written at that time :—

“41 ST ANDREW SQUARE, EDINBURGH,
8th April 1880.

“MY DEAR SISTER,—Your letter of yesterday I have just sent to Adam, by Herbert, as the Court is not sitting. I am very sad. I have been anxiously looking for some bright spot on which hope can rest. I can only feel, at last, that though Nature may work a cure in her own way, still, the

true resting-place of hope *is the Lord*. The darkness and the light are the same to Him. I am sorry his bodily strength is not maintained, but his brave heart does not quail. It has a strong consolation. All the great truths, with which he is so familiar and which he so often preached to others, will now gather round him and become clearer and brighter, as stars shine most brightly in the darkest night.

“I have been looking at some words in the Psalms that tell how the Royal Psalmist spent the night. He seems not to have been a good sleeper. His days were too full of care, and the cares of the day infested the night. He both wept and sang in the night-watches.

“Your nights look long now, and the daylight, slowly pressing in through the shutters, will be welcome.

“It is cheering to have so many and such kind friends among his people.

“‘Prayer was made for him continually;’ and the iron gate ‘opened of its own accord.’ . . .”

“EDIN., *April 19th*, 1880.

“MY DEAREST,—It is all over. I have the telegram. We are silent before the Lord. Neither can I say anything to you. He said, ‘I will come again, and receive you to myself.’ It is the Lord Himself who has visited your home. May God be with you all!”

In 1882 Mr Gifford was a little out of health, and was advised to take a period of entire rest.

He went to Africa with his younger daughter to visit his son James, and much enjoyed the voyage and the stay at Noodsburg.

Some details of this visit have been given in his letters. He returned home in February 1883, in perfectly restored strength.

His autumn visits to the Highlands and elsewhere were times of great enjoyment to himself and his family. Many secluded glens and mountains were visited, and each place, which was "home" for the time, has dear memories; very sacred now that he whose presence always made sunshine is gone.

In his holidays he never forgot his Master's business, and often responded to invitations to take a service in the village where he was. For himself the free mountain slopes, or the burn-side, or the shaded garden were holy ground, for he liked to pray there. He once said that he felt nearer Heaven in the open air, with no house made with hands over his head. In my home in Buckinghamshire, in the garden, looking to the green Chiltern hills, he used to sit in the early morning, when the shadows yet lay on the grass; and we knew he was praying—repeating in the Father's listening ear names that

he loved. The garden at Cargen Lodge, where his last years were spent, was his oratory, or in rough weather the little greenhouse, where he tended his beloved plants.

All through the years of which we have spoken, on Saturdays he and his brother Adam met. They sailed no more "Earl Greys," but they had a walk together, or latterly were together in Granton House or garden, where Adam now had his home.

In January 1881, Adam (then Lord Gifford) was struck down with paralysis. He never walked again, but his mind was fresh as ever, and John spent as much time with him as he could; sitting with him in the house, or walking by his invalid chair in the garden. Many themes congenial to both were discussed there. For the years before Lord Gifford's death, in 1887, his mind was continually engaged on the greatest subjects—God, immortality, sin, a future life—old reserve had passed away, and the words of faith and insight which he spoke can never be forgotten. In his long weary years of helplessness he never once complained, but often said that he knew "God's will for him was best."

When the end came John was with him. Death

was sealing his lips, and his last words to his brother, "John, I cannot speak to you," were often recalled afterwards when John walked alone in the familiar haunts where so often they had walked together. Sometimes he said, "I thought Adam *must* be near me, but communication has ceased. It is true, as he said, 'I cannot speak to you!'"

To a friend he wrote, 29th Dec. 1890 :—

"Leaves fall fast in autumn, and it is autumn now with me. My coevals have left me in rapid succession. . . .

"When I go along Princes Street, I know few faces compared with the numbers I once met on the pavement there. Those I do know seem all boys and girls; and when I go to the cemetery, I see, from the headstones, where my friends have gone. May I take the warning and be ready!"

TO DAVID M'LAREN, Esq. (his cousin).

"CARGEN LODGE, 24th Sept. 1891.

"MY DEAR DAVID,—You are often in my thoughts and prayers. I am glad to hear you are better. . . .

"Dr John called at my office; it was good of him. I hope you do not suffer much. It seems strange that suffering should do us good, for it prevents us from thinking. Yet we must be content *not to think*. It is not our thinking, more than our acting, that is our salvation. It is *His*

thinking and *His* acting. It is Himself who is our trust and our hope.

"May He say to you, 'Be of good cheer.' *Three times* our Lord said that, and gave three separate reasons for it. 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.' 'I have overcome the world.' 'It is I.' . . .—Yours ever truly,

"JOHN GIFFORD."

In October 1891 John Gifford came to Terrick House to be present at the marriage of his niece, Jessie Raleigh.

He writes from there to his wife:—

"TERRICK HOUSE, *October 31st, '91.*

" . . . Here I am in the bright library at Terrick, the sunshine pouring in at the three windows. I have had to close them against the sharp October air, for the hoar frost whitened the grass this morning. Adam secured me a berth in a sleeping car, and I got a good deal of dozing. We were an hour late. I got to Little Kimble at 2.30. George and the gig were waiting for me. Terrick looked bright, and Mary was so glad to see me. . . .

"There is a concentration of parcels and persons, all making for Wednesday. The *cake* came with me."

"*Nov. 2nd.*

"I have just arranged about my return. It has been very pleasant here.

"We went to church yesterday. It was the Communion

Sabbath—All Saints' day. We staid to that service. I rather like the English form of the Sacrament, but I cannot follow well the Morning Service, even when I have the words. The demand on the mind to comprehend the many high thoughts is too great. . . .

"Alice sang some of our grand old hymns in the evening, Jessie and the rest joining. It is the last Sabbath evening they will be together for a long time. We sang,

'Oh! spread Thy covering wings around!'

"Jessie is very nice, very busy, and very well. They are all so kind to their old Uncle. . . ."

1893.—Letters follow here in order of date.

It is noticeable that, in his letters about this time and onwards, there is a manifest home-turning in his thoughts—as a tired traveller, when evening begins to fall, looks wistfully for the gleam of the city he hopes to reach before the night comes down.

"CARGEN LODGE, *Nov.* 26, 1893.

"This Sabbath evening, and I am alone by the fireside at Cargen. I have read and meditated for a good while, and I would like a change. So I will write to my dear sister. How often we think of each other—don't we? . . .

"These last days we have been gathered mentally round dear Aunt Helen [his wife's only remaining sister]. She has been very ill, and we thought we were going to lose her. But,

by the care of doctor and nurse, and the prayers of those who love her, to-day she is a little better, and we venture to hope. Dear 'Grannie,' as her children call her, has a large family round her. Most bravely has she faced her work and done it, and if she were away, the centre of attraction that binds them together would be gone. . . .

"When a dear one draws near the golden gates, we crowd close round them, as if we could get a glimpse within. It brings us in thought close to that world to which we are hastening.

"I think no aspect of death is more consoling than that it is the final death *of sin*. The spirits of the just are then 'made perfect': 'with Me in paradise,' 'present with the Lord,' 'we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' These and such words point to the grand consummation—'without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing'—the long struggle of sinning and repenting, and sinning again, over for ever.

"I always remember the old nurse consoling a weeping daughter, at the side of her lifeless mother, with the words: 'The souls of believers are at death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory. And their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection.' It was strong consolation.

"These golden gates! Is there a crowd at the *other side* of them, of those who have already passed through, and who know that a loved one is drawing near?

"Are they waiting with their welcome to guide the entrant up to Him who says 'well done'?"

"I remember David comforted himself, when his boy died, by saying: 'I shall go *to him*.'

"I have been reading 'William Law, Puritan and Mystic,' being a book of extracts from Law's many books, by Dr Whyte of St George's. It is very thoughtful, and worth reading, but like a true mystic he blames 'the flesh and blood'—the natural body—for evils of which it is guiltless. Surely the body is God's good creature; and, if the *will* was all right, the body would not lead astray. It is not the case of the horse and his rider, where the lower animal has a will of its own. It is rather like the engine and its driver—a machine under a ruling will.

"Yet it is strange that the moment of the separation of soul and body is the moment chosen for the final separation of the soul from sin. William Law would claim that as supporting his estimate of the body. Think over it, and seek the way out. . . ."

The following note was called forth by the gift of "Recollections of Catherine M'Laren," by her sister:—

"DEAR CECY,—Thanks many for your precious memorial of Catherine. She is one of those who make heaven more dear to us; one of those whom, if ever by grace I reach heaven, I will surely seek out. Even among the 'multitude that no man can number' there must be some way to

find out our own, and not to feel ourselves alone in a crowd.

"I read last night all you have written; it is very pleasant, only there is too little of it. I remember much more regarding her, and won't forget it. . . ."

In closing the chapter on John Gifford's home life, I feel how impossible it is to give a true picture of his bright and gracious presence. In his earlier years we used to say that he was sharp in his temper, but that was long softened down, and only the quickness of sympathy and the sharpness of perception remained, with no trace of temper unsubdued.

Did he ever enter a room or a house when a ray of sunshine did not enter with him? His ready smile, his elastic step, his unquenchable hopefulness, all suggested youth—even when he was over seventy—and victory. He seemed to be crowned even here with the amaranthine wreath. Those who knew him will remember this impression, and for those who did not, it is too much to hope that any words will convey it.

Sensitive and sympathetic, he wept with those that weep and rejoiced with those that rejoice. Yet no sorrow ever had power to crush his hopefulness, or to

overwhelm him. This made him a true consoler. He would sit down with you in your hour of loss and tears, but before he left you, you felt that all was not lost, and you could look up once more.

He was specially free from the demon of "worry." With important business cares daily on hand, with all the uncertainties of changing experience, which make life to some men one long care, he never looked—and he never was—anxious or careworn. Something, no doubt, was due to a naturally buoyant temperament and exceptionally good health ; but the real reason lay deeper. The truth is, he lived out in his everyday life the Apostle's injunction : " Be careful *for nothing*, but in everything let your requests be made known unto God." And the sure reward came in benediction on his head. " And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep " (garrison) " your heart."

Those who knew him best know that he prayed about everything—family anxieties, decisions in business, investments of money—his own, and those of others—hopes, fears. All were laid at his Master's feet, and *left there*. So he walked through life a free and unburdened man.

His vivid sense of humour was a marked feature in a character so serious as his. It always seemed as if his seriousness was so deep, and his peace so sure, that he could afford to laugh and be merry. His face easily woke to ripples of laughter ; indeed smiles seemed to hide in the lines about his eyes always. A good story or a good joke instantly brought responsive mirth. His bearing and his look were a standing refutation of the idea that Christianity is a gloomy thing. It was his religion that made his life like a song in the morning.

He loved the quick repartee and the witty crux ; but his wit never wounded, and his jokes were always without a sting. It is something, even if one did nothing more, to carry through a long life in a sorrowful world like this, a sunny heart, a smiling face, and to drop acts and words of kindness, like dew, all along the way.

These were God's good gifts to John Gifford.

Looking forward to the future life, so much of heaven was about him here, that we do not want him to be changed in that "grand new world," only to be himself.

“ Now that thou art gone away,
What is there of one to say
Who was open as the day?
What is there to gloss or shun?
Save with kindly voices none
Speak thy name beneath the sun.
Over manly strength and worth,
At thy desk of toil or hearth,
Played the lambent light of mirth.
Mirth that lit but never burned,
All thy blame to pity turned,
Hatred thou hadst never learned.
Still to thee was duty's claim
Sacred—and thy lips became
Reverent with one Holy Name.
Therefore, on thy unknown way,
Go—in God's peace—we who stay
But a little while delay.
Keep for us, O friend, where'er
Thou art waiting, all that here
Made thy earthly presence dear.
Keep the human heart of thee,
Let the mortal only be
Clothed with immortality.
And when fall our feet as fell
Thine upon the asphodel,
Let thine old smile greet us well!”

WHITTIER.

CHAPTER VII

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

"I shall not fear when evening grey
Blots hill and valley from my sight ;
He who has fed me all the day
Will fold me all the night."—*Zeno*.

There is not much more to tell.

1895 opened cheerfully, and John Gifford was busy as ever. He was at his office for some hours every day, and at his business meetings. His Christian work went on with only a little abated energy. Still, as spring advanced, there were tokens of failing strength, and by the time the summer came, his looks told of some undermining ailment. Still, no one was anxious, least of all himself.

He began to go only intermittently to his beloved Carrubber's Close Mission, and by June he was obliged to discontinue entirely his work there.

In August he and Mrs Gifford went to Elie, Fife-

shire, and he was, it seemed, a little better for the change. The frequent steamers round the coast gave opportunity for fresh air without fatigue, and he enjoyed the time.

A few last letters are added here.

To a FRIEND.

“CARGEN, 4th August 1895.

“I was quite sorry not to see you yesterday, and not to be able to partake of your hospitality. But Mary would tell you the reason. My symptoms were so bad a fortnight ago that any return, though slight, called for care. I am quite well again. Then you were ill too, and we could have sympathized with each other. I hope we will meet soon—both better. Yet we know there is a weak point in these weak frames, and we cannot and ought not to forget it. . . .

“I am the oldest in the circle, and it is quite natural I should go first. Thankful for a long life of health and happiness, with few cloudy days, I may well be ready and willing to join the beloved ones yonder, knowing that loved ones here are sure to follow.

“Yesterday morning my little text-book gave me the words, ‘*Behold, I come as a thief.*’ ‘No, Lord; no, indeed!’ I exclaimed. A thief gives no warning as Thou dost; and he comes to take our property. Our Lord comes to take us to himself. Yet He speaks thus, knowing how apt we are to forget His coming—how He comes in the dark,

noiselessly, and that we cannot know the hour of His coming. He does not say 'death comes.' He has 'abolished death.' He comes *Himself*. As He said, 'I will come again, and receive you to myself.'

Miss Proctor beautifully says—

"On the day of my birth He plighted
His kingly word to me ;
I have seen Him in dreams so often
That I know what His smile must be."

To his SISTER.

"ELIE, *August 21st, 1895.*

" . . . Our letters crossed each other, so you see we have a mental telegraph. When you think of me and sit down to write to me I must do the same. . . .

"I go to sea for a day now and then. It suits those who cannot walk for hours together. Steamers leave here each forenoon to wander over the Firth. . . .

"No wonder we cannot walk far now. I was calculating the other day that, on an average, I, during my life, have walked three miles daily—that is 1000 miles each year. Thus I must have walked 74,000 miles, or three times round the world. No wonder I am tired! I can't have much further to go.—Yours ever."

To the same.

"ELIE, *August 24th.*

" . . . Thanks for remembering the 22nd? [his marriage day]. It is forty-six years ago. Do the dear

company of friends who were with us then remember it yonder? . . .

"You don't think I have walked so far? Why, for sixty years I went two miles to my work, that is *four* daily. I went to school when I was seven, and did you ever think how many miles a boy of seven years old *runs* daily?"

"Yes, my journey can't have been less than 1000 miles a year. It has been a long one. How pleasant and how good it has been! What pleasant company I have had! . . ."

To the same.

"CARGEN, 15th Sept. 1895.

". . . We have had a delightful calm Sabbath, and if we did not 'enter into rest' it was our own fault.

"After breakfast we went to the garden-seat, in the warm sunshine, and sang our morning hymn.

"For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love that from our birth
Over and around us lies."

". . . I have brought the photograph of father and mother from the parlour and placed them by the dining-room fireside. They are good. I wonder I did not move them before, it is such a pleasure to look at them. Father's likeness must have been taken in the seventies; he had evidently lost weight, and his coat fits him loosely. I remember, when going to Ireland, I went to say goodbye. He

and I went into the Drummond Place garden, and as we strolled on the grass he said, 'John, my work is over. God has more than fulfilled all my desires, and I am just waiting.'

"The wire reached me in Dublin, 'Father died this morning.' Our goodbye had been said. Is it because we are getting near the time of re-union that these memories become vivid? . . .

"Mary and I were the better of Elie, and I go to the office; but I use the cars more than I did, I do not feel able to walk so far. Then I have never returned to my work in Carrubber's Close on Tuesdays. I miss it; but they can do well without me. It is good to know you are not missed. Yet it is pleasant to think that some *will* miss you! Perhaps there are some yonder who miss us, and think 'would they were here!' . . . God has implanted within us a strong, longing love towards our own; surely that is a prophecy that one day love will be *satisfied*. . . ."

"20th Oct. '95.

"Your kind words ought to have been answered sooner, my dear sister. . . .

"You are better—I am so glad. You would like to see me. So would I to see you. You promised to come to Cargen this winter. I wonder if our warm love would keep the temperature up to suit you. I fear the doctor will say to you, 'Go south and meet the sun.'

“I am rather better, but am haunted still with symptoms which make me very useless. . . .

“‘He *remembers* we are dust.’ I have found that text sweet.

“Kind love to you and all.—Yours ever, “JOHN.”

“How would it do for us *three* to go to Madeira this winter for two months?”

The Sacrament Sabbath fell October 27th, but he was not able to be present. Mrs Thomson, a friend who had been associated with him in the Mission work at the Close, wrote to him sympathising with him in his enforced absence from the Communion service. In reply he wrote:—

“Your word—that although the Sacrament is over, the Communion is not—is indeed very precious.

“One hardly likes the name ‘Communion’ to be appropriated by the Lord’s Supper. Does the Bible, in any way, make it a means of grace more effectual than prayer?

“These lines came to mind while my thoughts were with the New North worshippers on Sabbath.

“So near, so very near to God,
More near I cannot be ;
For in the Person of His Son
I am as near as He.

“So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be ;
The love wherewith He loves His Son,
Such is His love to me.”

For him there were to be no more Sacramental feasts on earth ; he was about to drink the new wine in the Father's kingdom.

The foregoing letters tell the story of weakness gaining on the vital powers, slowly but surely. So gently was the silver cord being loosed, that he had no pain or very little. He was able to sleep and to take food, and this kept our hopes alive. The best medical aid was powerless to help, and so the last days drew on.

He slept much, but was able till within a week of the end to take sometimes a short drive. Calm and cheerful, and unabsorbed in himself he was, as ever.

The last letter he wrote to me—I believe the last he wrote to anyone—is the following. It is the last of very many. So our correspondence ceases. We are permitted no conscious communication with those who have been lifted to another plane of life from ours—probably such communication is not possible till we, too, have put on immortality. It must be

better so, although our human yearnings, with weary wings, beat against the adamantine walls of separation.

“CARGEN.

“MY OWN DEAR,—Your thoughts and your notes hover round me continually. How pleasant they are.

“This is the 16th of November, and I am at my desk [in his office]. It has been very difficult to get the business done. The Term and all its various transactions have pressed me somewhat. But dear Adam has been with me, and bravely carried all before him—written letters, cheques, bonds, coupons, &c., and all is now well finished.

“You are well again ; you will be a care-taken-of person for a time. May you be thoroughly restored.

“I am—well, rather shaken—my strength is so small. . . . It seems likely that I have not much further than 74,000 miles to walk. May I walk with God all the way.

“Blessings on you and yours ! Love to all.—Yours ever,
“JOHN GIFFORD.”

After this date, a fortnight before his death, his weakness increased rapidly. The doctors had expressed their opinion that his recovery was hopeless, and it was thought right that this should be made known to him. Very gently he was told. He received the tidings in silence, as if surprised. After

a little he said quietly: "It is all right." No more was said. How much was thought and felt may be imagined.

That afternoon he sent for his son, and asked him to bring from his office all his ledgers, account books, &c. It was done. Very calmly he looked over his worldly affairs, made several calculations, revised and made some slight changes in various arrangements.

Everything was finished; he had no earthly cares left, and from that time sleep seemed to take possession of him.

He was roused occasionally to take food, and sometimes would open his eyes and murmur a word of love to his wife, or name his children, and then in a moment he was asleep again.

Once, in one of these waking intervals, he said: "I am not hopeless. I hope in God." He was asked if he had any message for me or for his son and daughter far away. He could only look earnestly and shake his head. His love-messages had all been sped—he had no more farewells to give to any one.

On Monday, December 2nd, the end came. His son had been with him all that Sabbath day, and part of the night following. As the night wore on,

he became restless, with that longing to be up and away that so often precedes the great departure. His dearest were round him, but they were willing at last to let him go—he was so weary, and rest would be so sweet.

While yet he could hear her, an hour before the end, Mrs Gifford repeated to him the hymn he loved so much :

“ The sands of Time are sinking,
The dawn of heaven breaks ;
The summer morn I’ve sighed for,
The fair, sweet morn awakes.”

His breathing grew feebler, till the watching group thought him almost gone, when suddenly, at four o’clock, he slightly raised his head, his eyes opened, full and bright—looking with a joyful intentness, as if some blessed vision had broken on his sight. Then his features settled into calm, and he was at rest. “ That look was *not for us* ” his wife wrote afterwards. Is it that the Saviour, coming for His own, sometimes makes His presence known before the home faces of earth are lost to sight ? So the love of earth meets and yields to the love divine.

He was laid in the family burying-ground in the Old Calton, beside his father and mother and his little son. There also sleeps our brother Adam and his young wife, who died so early.

Some friends—dwellers near the “Close”—looked on as his earthly part was laid to rest, and others came afterwards to look at the grave. Sad hearts of rich and poor were there, for he was dear to many.

Yet what can any one say? His day's work was well done. He had “served his generation by the will of God,” and what remained but to fall on sleep?

“THEY THAT SLEEP IN JESUS WILL GOD
BRING WITH HIM.”

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.

11774.1

BX Raleigh, Mary, ed.
9225 John Gifford, memories and letters. Edin
G5 Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1896.
R3 128p. port. 20cm.

1. Gifford, John, 1821-1895. I. Gifford,
John, 1821-1895.

CCSC/mmmb

A 17764

